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Inter-Arab Affairs

'Aziz Arrives in Tripoli, Meets PLO Leaders

JN2304205891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2034 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Tripoli, 23 Apr (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz and the accompanying delegation arrived in Tripoli tonight on a visit to Libya. JANA said that Colonel Mustafa al-Kharrubi, member of the Libyan Revolution Command Council, received the deputy prime minister at Tripoli international airport.

Tariq 'Aziz today conveyed an oral message from President Saddam Husayn to his brother Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali during a meeting in the Tunisian capital with Tunisian Prime Minister Hamed Karoui in the presence of Foreign Minister Habib Benyahia.

Tunisian political circles said that the deputy prime minister was unable to meet Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali as scheduled because the latter was suffering a health indisposition.

Last night, 'Aziz met in Tunis with Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, in the presence of Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, and George Habash, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The deputy prime minister also met with Nayif Hawatmah, secretary general of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Palestinian Affairs

PLO Officers to Moscow for 'Urgent' Talks

Meeting Before Baker Talks

LD2304183391 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] PLO Executive Committee members Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh and Sulayman al-Najjab yesterday left for Moscow to hold an urgent meeting with the Soviet foreign minister, Bessmertnykh, prior to the Soviet minister's talks with his U.S. counterpart, Baker.

Brother 'Abd-Rabbuh pointed out that he was taking a letter from the PLO to the Soviet official, in which the PLO stresses it has neither abandoned its role of representing the Palestinian people nor the international resolutions concerning the Palestine issue. Brother 'Abd-Rabbuh stressed that any search for a temporary solution to the Palestine issue must be linked to the final solution, that is to the withdrawal [from occupied territories] and self-determination for the Palestinian people.

'Abd-Rabbuh Interviewed

JN2304141291 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1100 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Telephone interview with Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, PLO Executive Committee member, by Muhammad al-Sharif, "prior to 'Abd-Rabbuh's meeting with the Soviet Foreign Minister" in Moscow—recorded]

[Text] [Al-Sharif] What is the nature of your current task in Moscow?

['Abd-Rabbuh] We are now holding contacts with Soviet officials, especially the foreign minister, regarding the current efforts to launch a political process in the region. It is known that the Soviet foreign minister will meet with the U.S. secretary of state tomorrow. Therefore, the consultations we are holding now between the PLO delegation and Soviet officials have great significance. During these talks, we will stress our position, which is that the formula for making progress toward peace is to hold an international conference based on the international legitimacy resolutions with the equal and balanced participation of all parties, especially the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. These issues are fundamental now. We will see how matters will develop in light of these contacts. We believe that unless progress is made on this road, it will be difficult to speak of any positive points in what is taking place now.

[Al-Sharif] Mr. Yasir, are the ideas you have just spoken of the results of the PLO Central Council meetings in Tunis?

['Abd-Rabbuh] These have constituted the PLO's position prior to and during the Central Council meetings. It is known that in our opinion, the alleged regional conference does not fulfill the conditions for a just solution. Furthermore, the participation of all parties—whether the PLO or the Arab quarters—is a basic issue, in addition to European participation. Also, the United Nations must supervise this conference. In other words, the UN resolutions must be the basis for this conference. Therefore, we have called for and stressed that the Arab parties concerned with the international peace conference should meet in order to coordinate their positions. We mean by this Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Lebanon. This would be to the benefit of all these Arab states, in addition to being of service to the peace process.

[Al-Sharif] Does your visit to Moscow imply that you believe that the Soviet Union will play an effective role in the current settlement endeavors?

['Abd-Rabbuh] We hope so. We believe that whenever the Soviet efforts come closer to adhering to international legitimacy and the principles we have mentioned, they will have a more effective role.

[Al-Sharif] Thank you Mr. Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh.

['Abd-Rabbuh] Thank you.

Talks With Bessmertnykh

JN2404192791 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Prior to the Baker-Bessmertnykh meeting, the Palestinian leadership dispatched to Moscow Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, head of the PLO Information Department, and another Palestinian official, Sulayman al-Najjab.

The Palestinian delegation met with Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh. In direct contact with our radio, Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh told us that discussions dealt with the peace process in the Middle East in detail. He also noted that there was full understanding that the peace conference should have clear bases, which are the resolutions adopted by the international legitimacy on the Middle East and the Palestine question.

As for the issue of Palestinian representation, 'Abd-Rabbuh explained that there is a Soviet understanding of the PLO position which stresses the PLO's right to form the Palestinian delegation to the negotiations from inside and outside the territories. Concerning the international parties which are supposed to take part in the conference, the Palestinian delegation asserted the need to give the European Community a role in the peace conference. The Soviet side demonstrated understanding and support for this request and for the PLO's clinging to the need to link the phases of the solution prior to reaching the final settlement which should achieve withdrawal and materialize the Palestinian people's right to self- determination.

The Palestinian delegation will stay in Moscow to see the outcome of the Baker-Bessmertnykh talks. The Palestinian delegation may stop over in Paris on its way back from the Soviet Union to the Arab region.

'Arafat Offers 'Hand' of 'Peace' to Shamir

LD2504085991 Paris Domestic Service in French 0600 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] The president of the PLO is clearly trying to reintegrate himself into the peace process under way in the Middle East. His pro-Iraqi position during the Gulf conflict are not making his task any easier. Yesterday evening on "La Marche du Siecle" [the "March of the Century" TV program] on FR3, Yasir 'Arafat stretched out his hand to the Israeli prime minister:

[Begin 'Arafat recording in English] I am worried that if this oppression and these daily crimes continue, these daily massacres against my people, I don't know how it will end. Patience has limits and we hope that the international community will interfere as they have interfered in Kuwait, I am sure that it.... [changes thought] I am opening my hand for him to make real peace. Is he ready? [end recording]

Hamas Movement Rejects Baker-Palestinian Talks

JN2404173791 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1630 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] The Islamic resistance movement Hamas issued a statement the day before yesterday [22 April] stressing its position rejecting the meeting between the Palestinian figures and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

The movement called for designating today, Wednesday, as a day of comprehensive strike, and 25 April as a day of escalation, along the path of the martyrs and mujahidin.

PLO Rejects Solutions Not Based on 'Legitimacy'

LD2404191291 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] After the conclusion of its proceedings yesterday evening, the Palestine Central Council stressed its rejection of any attempt to resolve the Middle East problem that is not based on international legitimacy and does not accept the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to establish an independent state of their own under the leadership of the PLO.

Regarding the meetings of the Central Council, brother Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh said that the participants have examined the principles on which the PLO's stance vis-a-vis the proposed peace plans must be based. He added: The basis is to participate in the peace process through a Palestinian delegation from inside and abroad; such a delegation must be formed by the PLO. He stressed the need to adopt international legitimacy and its resolutions as a basis for an international conference.

An informed Palestinian source in occupied Jerusalem yesterday, Tuesday, said that U.S. Secretary of State James Baker had asked Palestinian figures whom he met in the occupied territories last Saturday not to include the issue of East Jerusalem on the list of their priorities.

The source said that the Palestinian figures told the head of U.S. diplomacy that it is not possible to exclude the Jerusalem issue from any talks.

PLO Council Details Peace Conference Demands

LD2404155591 Rabat MAP in English 1321 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Tunis, Apr.24 (MAP)—The Central Council of the Palestine Liberation Organization (CC-PLO) rejected the idea of any regional or international peace conference on the Middle East unless it is based on international legality and takes into account the Palestinian people's right to self-rule and the setting up of an independent state under PLO leadership.

In a meeting here this April 21-23, the council stressed the need to heal inter-Arab relations and restore them on the basis of decisions by Arab summits.

It also recommended the restoration of the PLO's relations with Syria, Lebanon and Egypt and called for speeding up the holding of a meeting to gather the PLO, these three countries and Jordan.

The CC-PLO, intermediary body between the PLO executive committee and the Palestinian National Council (parliament), assessed the stands of brotherly countries and in the first instance the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA, gathering Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) and those of some friendly countries such as France, the USSR and the Vatican.

A final statement is to be issued this Wednesday.

PLO Council Urges International Peace Conference

LD2504084691 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 0600 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] At the conclusion of its three-day ordinary session in Tunisia, the PLO Central Council has stressed the need for holding an international peace conference with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the PLO and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, under the aegis of the United Nations.

The council rejected the holding of a regional or any other conference not based on international legitimacy.

In its final statement, disseminated yesterday by the Palestine news agency, WAFA, the PLO Central Council called on the UN Security Council to adopt one standard in dealing with international issues. It rejected the use of double standards and the decimation of international legitimacy in dealing with the cause of the Palestine people.

On the other hand, the PLO Central Council called for the convocation of an urgent five-member Arab conference to include the Arab countries directly concerned with the Arab-Israeli conflict—namely, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. Such a conference would coordinate and unify the Arab countries' positions through resolutions based on international and Arab legitimacy.

French Foreign Minister, 'Arafat Meet in Tripoli

PM2404104491 Paris LE MONDE in French 24 Apr 91 p 3

[Jacques de Barrin report: "Roland Dumas Is First Western Official To Meet With PLO Leader Since Gulf War"]

[Text] Tripoli—The meeting between Roland Dumas and Yasir 'Arafat, which was to take place in Tunis at noon on Monday and was canceled because of a sudden change in the minister's program, was only postponed by a few hours after all. It took place at 0015 hours on Tuesday, 23 April in a large hotel in Tripoli, Libya—the first stage in a tour which is to take the French foreign minister to Egypt next.

Mr. Dumas is therefore the first Western official to meet with the PLO leader since the start of the Gulf war, despite the fact that the twelve had decided to freeze all high-level contact with the Palestinian organization, which was ostracized for supporting the Iraqi cause. But France considered that, at a time when major diplomatic maneuvers are taking place in the Near East, it was no longer wise for it to remain inactive.

"We can usefully act as intermediaries," the minister told us. According to him, his argument "carried weight" with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, with whom he had a meeting in Luxembourg last week. "It will be even better," he added, "if we are able to contribute to the success of a regional conference even if we may have doubts" about the U.S. approach. This new meeting—the last dates back to 14 October 1990 in Tunis—was organized "at Mr. 'Arafat's request and with the Libyan authorities' agreement," the French side stressed. These carefully phrased remarks seemed aimed at trying to forestall the reactions of Western partners who might deem this initiative inopportune or at least premature.

Addressing Mr. Dumas, the PLO leader firmly reiterated his rejection of a regional conference on the Palestinian question which would not be held under UN auspices and from which Europe would be excluded, especially "France, which," he reaffirmed to us, "has an essential role to play in building peace."

Of course, discussions on the subject have resumed since the end of the Gulf conflict, as Mr. Baker's Near East tours show, but "is the aim to find a solution or simply play for time," Mr. 'Arafat asked, noting "no change in the U.S. position." The PLO leader expects the anti-Iraq coalition to break up "because," he explained, "its members no longer have the same interests to defend after the war."

Would the formula of Jordanian-Palestinian representation at the negotiating table make it possible to break the deadlock? "It is a good formula," Mr. Dumas admitted. But, for Mr. 'Arafat, who did not reject it out of hand, "it is an old idea which has already been rejected by Israel and the United States." To those who are trying to ignore him, the PLO leader retorted in exasperation: "You cannot hide the sun with your hand."

Egypt

Mubarak Address on Sinai Liberation Anniversary

NC2404162791 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Speech to the nation by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak on the ninth anniversary of the liberation of Sinai—live or recorded]

[Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.

Brother citizens. Amid the great historic events that Egypt and our Arab nation are experiencing, I do not believe for a single moment that we can forget the date of 25 April. It was the day when the liberation of Egyptian territories was completed. It was the day we raised our banners over every single inch of our national soil. It is the day we remember our Armed Forces, the heroes and their courage, the martyrs who gave their lives, and those who were injured in the biggest battle in our military history. That battle restored dignity to the Arab nation and allowed it to hold its head high after adversaries the world over said that Egypt had become impotent and paralyzed.

We embarked on war for the sake of peace. We achieved victory in war and in peace. Egyptian sovereignty was complete, and Egypt's soil again belonged to all the Egyptian people. The entire world, east and west, north, and south, came to know that the Egyptian will does not retreat, relinquish, or bend.

Brothers and sisters. Our loyalty requires us to remember with deep respect and appreciation the late President Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat, the architect of the war and the peace decisions.

While the battles in the October war represented the epitome of creativity in planning and execution and required from us the greatest efforts and courage, the peace battle represented a world concept, a historic vision, and a massive political struggle. Peace achieved what wars could not, regardless of how long they lasted and regardless of how great the battles. The events that followed proved conclusively the soundness of the Egyptian concept and the ability of the national will to deal with international developments with a profound understanding and a conscious confrontation.

Brother compatriots, 25 April this year comes after grave events, perhaps the most momentous that the Arab nation has encountered. Egypt, with its people, Army, and national unity, has proved that it is capable of performing its leading role out of commitment to principles and to preserving peace. The Egyptian stand on the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and its people was a commitment to principle, regardless of the dangers. Egypt played a positive role in support of justice and in defiance of falsehood, regardless of sacrifices.

Our Armed Forces performed their desired task. The Egyptian people stood as one, defying oppression and unafraid of the oppressors' threats. As we celebrate today the liberation of Egyptian land, we also celebrate the liberation of the Arab Kuwaiti land.

The desire for peace imposes great burdens on us. Egypt does not escape from or evade the stand of principle or legitimacy, regardless of the burdens. My sincere congratulations to every Egyptian citizen on Egyptian land and in every Arab land on the liberation of Sinai anniversary. I invoke God Almighty to preserve our faith because faith is a stand. Egypt is the maker of history, history which preserves principles and safeguards high ideals. Our land, which has given us a great deal, deserves more sacrifices from us. Happy anniversary and may God's peace and mercy be with you.

'Abd-al-Majid Comments on Arab Division, Iraq

NC2404120991 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0845 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Muscat, 24 Apr (MENA)—Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has stressed that the division that the Arab world went through due to the Gulf crisis is not the first of its kind, and he said the Arab nation will be able to overcome it. This was his comment on the upcoming Arab League Council meeting, which he said could signal the start of new common Arab action and lay the foundation for new Arab solidarity in the wake of the Gulf crisis.

In an interview with the Omani newspaper 'UMAN published today, 'Abd-al-Majid said the Arab countries want to mend the rift the Gulf crisis caused. Naturally, he added, this is a difficult and arduous task, but there are lessons to be learned from the trying experience the Arab nation has gone through. He said there also is room to mend the crack in the wall of Arab solidarity. He emphasized the need for the Arab nation to develop a new method to face the future, particularly after the rocky experience it has gone through.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid emphasized that the security arrangements in the region agreed upon by the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Egypt and Syria are neither directed against anyone nor intended to form an axis against anyone. He added: This must be understood and clear to everyone.

Referring to the Damascus Declaration, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said the declaration speaks for itself, and it is obviously clear that it reflects the converging views of its eight signatories. He stressed that the door is open for any Arab country that shares the same views of its signatories and accepts this declaration.

Asked about his views regarding the internal situation in Iraq, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid stressed that Egypt [words indistinct] members of the Arab League. Based on this principle, Egypt believes that the Iraqi people are the ones who must settle this issue.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid also underlined Egypt's position against the fragmentation of Iraq. He stressed that Egypt believes in the need to defend Iraq's territorial unity and political stability.

Responding to a question about the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in the region, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said several years ago Egypt demanded that the Middle East region be made a peace zone free from those weapons. He added: When we talk about weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, we mean the elimination of the weapons possessed by all countries, including Israel.

As for the Palestinian issue and the international peace conference, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid reiterated that this issue has been entrusted to the the Arabs. He stressed that Egypt wants to work out a solution that guarantees the political and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. He pointed out that only the Palestinians can represent themselves at any talks. He said that the Palestinian people alone are entitled to determine their representatives, and we must help them resolve their just and legitimate issue.

In the interview, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid lauded the profound and strong fraternal relations between Egypt and the Sultanate of Oman. He said that the distinguished relations between the two countries are quite well developed and have been strongly promoted. He said the relationship has made great strides under the leadership of Sultan Qabus and President Husni Mubarak, who are linked with the closest relations based on full understanding and identical views regarding Arab, Islamic, and international issues.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid underlined the major role being played by the Sultanate in backing the joint Arab and Islamic action, particularly under the difficult circumstances as a result of the Kuwaiti crisis and its consequences on the Arab solidarity march. He added that the Sultanate, thanks to the wise, balanced, and quiet policy of Sultan Qabus, can play an important role in this stage through which the joint Arab action is passing.

Ghali: Nile Not Part of Mideast Water Problems

NC2404185091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1750 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Excerpt] Cairo, 24 Apr (MENA)—Dr. Butrus Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs, has warned of the dangers of water shortages in the Middle East. He also has warned that this problem will be the focus of the region's next conflict, and that it is a time bomb ready to explode.

In an interview with AKHIR SA'AH magazine published today, he said that the 1990's will be a decade of conflict over limited water resources in the Middle East. He noted that there are, in fact, people suggesting that water be dealt with like oil: as a scarce commodity over which consumers are competing.

He stressed the importance of not confusing issues and linking the Nile River to Middle East water resources. He said: It should be clear that when we talk about water in the Middle East, we are not including the Nile River basin.

Dr. Ghali noted that since 1967 Israel has been in control of around 2.3 billion cubic meters of the Arab nation's water resources through the Jordan River and that Israel's need for water will increase by 3 percent. It becomes clear from this that Israel arouses Arab fears from time to time regarding the security of Arab water resources, he added.

Dr. Ghali said that the Nile is Egypt's national security and that the country is seeking cooperation and coordination among the eight Nile basin countries, the Undugo countries. He added that Egyptian diplomacy is seeking, through what can be termed "water diplomacy," to encourage and achieve regional and semiregional cooperation in order to overcome the problems of water and achieve Egypt's national security. [passage omitted]

Columnist Views Regional Arms Race, PRC Role

NC2504104091 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 22 Apr 91 p 16

[By Anis Mansur from the "Stands" column]

[Excerpts] The Middle East arms race has surfaced again. Arms contracts amounting to $30 billion have been concluded and the arms merchants in Europe, Asia, and Latin America are trying to find a third party willing to smuggle the arms.

The United States will agree to sell arms to Iraq when Saddam leaves because Iraq must enforce its internal security and must stand up to Iran.

The surprise among the arms merchants, however, is China. China has set up a 15-40-megawatt nuclear reactor in the Algerian desert. The United States only recently discovered this reactor's existence. The reactor, too big for scientific purposes and too small for power generation, was partly financed by Iraq.

China also has supplied Pakistan with the 600-km range M-11 missile, which carries a 500-kg warhead and can reach any target in India. The missiles' mobile launching pads have already arrived.

China also has supplied Syria with M-9 missiles. With a range of 600 km, it can reach any target in Israel. The U.S. national security adviser tried to prevent this deal from being finalized when he visited China, where he was assured that China would not conclude the deal. [passage omitted]

Iran obtained 300 Scud missiles from North Korea and other sophisticated missiles from other countries through a third party.

China's strong argument is that all the countries which agreed not to sell weapons in the region are, in fact, secretly selling them. China contends that the European countries differ politically only in public, but economically they have agreed to share the oil booty and deal in Middle East markets.

The Chinese stand will cause an impasse in U.S.-Chinese relations which will be much worse than the one that existed before Nixon's visit to China.

Libya

Al-Kharrubi Honors Tariq 'Aziz at Dinner

LD2404125291 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0040 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Tripoli, 24 Apr JANA—Colonel Mustafa al-Kharrubi hosted a dinner banquet here last night in honor of Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz.

The dinner was attended by Ibrahim Muhammad al-Bishari, secretary of the General People's Committee for External Liaison and International Cooperation.

Tariq 'Aziz arrived in Tripoli yesterday evening from sisterly Tunisia.

'Aziz Concludes Visit

LD2404154791 Tripoli Domestic Service in Arabic 1230 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] This morning, Colonel Mustafa al-Kharrubi received Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister of fraternal Iraq, who paid a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah.

Brother Tariq 'Aziz, the deputy prime minister of fraternal Iraq, and members of his delegation, left Tripoli today at the end of their visit to the Great Jamahiriyah.

Colonel Mustafa al-Kharrubi headed those who were at hand at the Tripoli international airport to see him off.

Western 'Occupation' of Iraq Condemned

LD2404141291 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic at 1220 GMT on 24 April 91

[Station commentary]

[Text] What benefit would there be for the Arab nation if Iraq were to be occupied after the liberation of Kuwait? What was wanted was not the exchange of one occupation for another occupation and the liberation of one Arab country so that another Arab country could be occupied.

What was wanted was the implementation of international legitimacy only. What is now taking place in northern Iraq is an act of total occupation of the Arab Iraqi lands and total transgression of international legitimacy, a flouting of the United Nation, and a flagrant exploitation of its name.

Iraq has been humiliated and subdued by the imposition of humiliating conditions on it. It has been robbed of its willpower and its freedom to make decisions.

Today, a part of Iraq is being occupied. Where is the international legitimacy? Where is the United Nations? Can those who rejected what Iraq did against Kuwait accept what the U.S., British, and French forces are doing now in northern Iraq?

Awake, O Arabs! What is taking place now in northern Iraq [words indistinct] whose page has been turned. This is a new chapter in a major plot which is aimed at the Arab nation with the intention of dismembering and breaking it up more than it is dismembered and broken up now.

It is a major plot which aims at crushing the banner of Arabism once and for all, so that the banners of the new Crusades and Zionism will flutter here and there.

Awake O Arabs! The Kuwaiti crisis was nothing more than the key, and humiliated Iraq was nothing but the mount used for the achievement of wider and far-reaching steps aimed at the complete and final domination of the Arab homeland and placing it under the heel of the Western boot.

Officials Meet French Communist Party Secretary

LD2504062291 Tripoli Domestic Service in Arabic 1230 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] This morning, an intellectual dialogue took place at the Liaison Bureau of the Revolutionary Committee in Tripoli between a number of Revolutionary Committee Movement members and Maxime Gremetz, French Communist Party Central Committee secretary, and the official in charge of foreign affairs at the party's Political Bureau.

The participants in the dialogue reviewed the international changes that are taking place in the world today and the need to rally the progressive and revolutionary forces together to formulate a new world order in a manner unlike that called for by U.S. President Bush.

The Revolutionary Committee Movement and the French Communist Party Central Committee secretary agreed on the need to rally the progressive and revolutionary forces on both the regional and international levels.

Mauritania

President Taya Meets With Iraq's 'Aziz

LD2504002291 Nouakchott Domestic Service in Arabic 2030 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Excerpt] This evening Col. Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, chairman of the Military Committee for National Salvation and head of state, received Tariq 'Aziz, member of the Iraqi Revolution Command Council and

day as prime minister. The meeting was attended by Hasan Ould Dah, minister of foreign affairs and cooperation, and Thabit Nu'man al-'Ani, Iraqi ambassador to our country, and our ambassador in Baghdad [name indistinct]. Tariq 'Aziz arrived in Nouakchott today at noon. [passage omitted]

Morocco

Egypt's Ghali Arrives for Talks 22 April

LD2304034491 Rabat MAP in English 2308 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Rabat, Apr. 23 (MAP)—Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butros Ghali expressed hope the end of the Gulf war will usher in a new era of solidarity among Arab states and enhanced inter-Arab cooperation through joint action.

The official arrived in Morocco Monday with a message from President Hosni Mubarak to King Hassan II. He meets several cabinet members and attends the first session of the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco for the year 1991 which opened Monday in Casblanca.

Ghali also told the media his hope the Arab League ministerial meeting scheduled for the end of May in Cairo would trigger this joint action and help strengthen Arab solidarity.

Meets With King Hassan II

LD2504082291 Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 2300 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] His Majesty King Hassan II received Butros Ghali, Egyptian minister of state for foreign affairs, at the royal court in Rabat this evening. The audience was attended by Abdellatif Filali, minister of state for foreign affairs and cooperation.

Sudan

Iranian President's Statement on Ties Cited

LD2404204891 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan in Arabic 1800 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the Iranian president, has made a statement on Radio Tehran concerning the resumption of active relations between Khartoum and Baghdad after the end of the Gulf war. He expressed his indignation at the development, saying that the Khartoum regime supported the murderers and killers and stood in support of the violation of international legality. These developments come in the wake of continuous demands to the Khartoum government by the extremist wing within the Iranian Government to sever its deteriorating relations between Baghdad and Tehran [as heard] and to align with Tehran. This follows the al-Bashir regime's pledges to Tariq 'Aziz to mediate in the issue of the Iraqi planes which are now in Iran.

Iranian Counsellor Visits Military Hospital

LD2504120592 Khartoum SUNA in English 0608 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] Khartoum, 25 Apr (SUNA)—The cultural attaché of the Iranian Embassy to Khartoum, Amir Moseni, has visited yesterday the Medical Corps and inspected the victims of the war in southern Sudan and presented some gifts to them and to the ill in the hospital. The Iranian diplomat pledged that the visit will be a beginning of future cooperation between the Sudanese and Iranian military hospitals in the field of medical services. Medical Corps Major General 'Ali Muhammad 'Uthman al-Fadlabi, the director of medical services, and Medical Corps Colonel 'Abd-al-Mun'im Yusuf, the commander of the military hospital thanked the Iranian counsellor for paying this gracious visit.

Tribes, Army Reportedly Clash in Darfur

LD2404203592 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan in Arabic 1900 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Reports coming from [word indistinct] in central-western Sudan say that the security situation is extremely critical, which has led to the [Um] Jhagwarah, and Mashab tribes joining forces on the levels of leadership and leaders [as heard]. Skirmishes and a savage [word indistinct] area. Reports say that four officers and 63 soldiers were killed in the clashes and many more injured. The fighting has now spread to Jabal Marrah in northern Darfur.

Tunisia

Iraq's 'Aziz Arrives for Official Talks

LD2304124091 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1129 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Tunis, 23 Apr (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz arrived in Tunis late last night on a tour of the Arab Maghreb states.

'Aziz will hold talks with Tunisian officials on relations between the two fraternal countries and the latest developments in the Middle East.

President Ben 'Ali Leaves for PRC Visit

LD2504072991 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Excerpt] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali left Tunisia at 1630 this afternoon for Beijing on a four-day official visit from 25 to 28 April. [passage omitted]

Portuguese Foreign Minister Holds Talks

LD2504194291 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Excerpt] This morning at the government palace in the Casbah, Prime Minister Hamed Karoui received Joao de

Dinis Pinheiro, the Portuguese foreign minister. The meeting, which was attended by Foreign Minister Hamdi Ben Yahya and Portugal's ambassador to Tunis, focused on ways to bolster fields of cooperation between the two countries.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Pinheiro highlighted the significance of this meeting particularly now that Tunisian-Portuguese relations are characterized by a coincidence of views on economic and social levels. He also expressed optimism regarding the development of Tunisian-Portuguese cooperation, and stressed the intention of both governments to encourage such cooperation.

In this connection the visiting minister stated that a delegation of Tunisian businessmen is currently visiting Portugal. He also indicated that the forthcoming visit of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to Portugal is expected to give an added boost to relations of bilateral cooperation and to increase contacts between Tunisian and Portuguese businessmen.

He added that his talks with the prime minister also dealt with current relations between the Arab Maghreb Union [AMU] and the EEC and ways of bolstering them. [passage omitted]

For his part, the foreign minister, Mr. Hamdi Ben Yahya, also held separate talks this morning with his Portuguese counterpart. The two sides debated issues pertaining to relations between Maghreb states and the EEC, particularly, with the four states from southern Europe: Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy.

The two parties also discussed ways to strengthen cooperation between regional groupings on the political level, and also on economic, financial, cultural, and social levels. In this context, the Portuguese foreign minister stated that his visit to Tunisia, which forms a part of a tour of the AMU states, represents the desire of Portugal, assuming the EEC presidency next January, which is to establish close relations between the AMU and the EEC.

Bahrian

UAE President Arrives for Two-Day Visit

JN2404153491 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1455 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Excerpt] Manama, 24 Apr (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], arrived in Manama this evening from Kuwait on a two-day official visit to Bahrain. The visit is part of his tour of Gulf Cooperation Council countries. [passage omitted]

Kuwait

Prime Minister Addresses New Government

LD2504011891 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 2016 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Speech by Crown Prince Shaykh Sa'ad al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, prime minister, at the 23 April cabinet session in Kuwait; from the "Kuwait message" program—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, praise be to God, and peace and prayers upon the messenger of God. Brother honorable colleagues: I greet you, welcome you, and salute your response to the call of national duty, and your good response to the call to participate in serving the dear homeland through assuming the responsibilities of ministerial appointment. [passage omitted]

Brothers, our dear homeland was plagued by the worst things any homeland can be plagued by—a treacherous aggression, an unjust invasion, and a sinful occupation. Our honorable people suffered the harshest treatment any people can suffer—murder, ruthless action, homelessness, torture, injustice, and repudiation. [passage omitted]

You have before you serious tasks and great challenges which have long-term effects on the progress of our dear homeland. You have before you the task of consolidating the pillars of security and stability in our dear country, and to return a peace of mind to the citizen so that Kuwait will become what it was—a home of security and safety. You have before you the task of rebuilding the amenities and installations destroyed by the aggressors, and to provide all public services. [passage omitted]

You have before you the responsibility of caring for the families of Kuwait's pious martyrs and to make every possible effort to secure the release of our prisoners and ensure their safe return. You have before you the responsibility of caring for our people and the sons of our people and of removing the pain they have suffered—whether at the hands of the forces of the treacherous occupation or as a result of fleeing and leaving our homes—and of working in every way to extract their right to compensation from the treacherous aggressor.

You have before you the responsibility of raising the new generation and caring for the young on the basis of the teachings of our true religion—the principles of our tolerant Shari'ah and the sound values of our society—of planting noble virtues and morals in them, and of firmly establishing the value of work, production, and self-reliance.

You have before you the responsibility of consolidating our national unity, strengthening our internal front, and cementing the cohesion of our society, viewing them as the rock on which the ambitions of the aggressors and their evil schemes were destroyed.

You have before you the responsibility of preparing the country for the resumption of parliamentary life and holding general elections next year, God willing, to fulfill the pledge made by the leader of our march, his highness the amir, and of firmly establishing the principle of consultation and deepening popular participation.

You have before you the responsibility of studying the demographic composition of our society in a way that will serve the supreme interests of the homeland and the citizens.

Brothers, before you is the task of revitalizing our economy, getting it moving, reactivating it, and providing prosperity in our dear homeland.

You have before you the task of working to deepen and expand brotherly solidarity with the brothers in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in all fields, and of bolstering coordination and cooperation with all brothers and friends, particularly those who stood by us during our ordeal.

Brother colleagues, we have learned many lessons from that bitter experience and we have to translate them into practical policies and plans to be implemented. Among the objectives of the treacherous aggressors after leaving our dear homeland humiliated and defeated, was to keep us preoccupied and to leave us with problems which would undermine the stability of our country, [word indistinct] the cohesion of our society, rupture the firmness of our front, and divert us from following our regional, Arab, and international role. We must all rise to abort the enemy's schemes and start working in all fields to consolidate the traditional role of Kuwait and its effective contribution in support of the issues of our Arab and Islamic nation, and to work for the good of humanity as a whole.

Brothers, these are the most important and principal tasks which the government must accomplish. I am confident that you are aware of the nature of the fateful phase through which our dear homeland is passing. Your success in confronting these challenges and accomplishing these tasks will have its long-term effect on our national march now and in the future. [passage omitted]

Amir Welcomes Visiting UAE President

LD2404110391 (Clandestine) Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1000 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Excerpt] UAE President His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan arrived in Kuwait at noon today on a brotherly visit.

His Highness the Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah headed those welcoming him. Shaykh Sa'ad al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, his highness the heir apparent and prime minister; Shaykh Salim al-Sabah al-Salim his highness the deputy prime minister and foreign minister; and a number of shaykhs, ministers, and senior officials also attended the welcoming. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Article Examines Reforms in Saudi Arabia

JN2404172791 Cairo MISR AL-FATAH in Arabic 1 Apr 91 p 3

[Unattributed "exclusive report": "House of Sa'ud Rejects Democratic Reforms"]

[Text] Riyadh—It is now certain that there is a trend within the Saudi Government to introduce some democratic reforms in Saudi Arabia in view of the political and military results of the Gulf war.

Political sources in Riyadh hinted that there is nothing thus far to indicate that the government intends to undertake such reforms. Indeed, these sources say that there is a strong trend in the Saudi Government to block all the demands that emerged during the Gulf war and which called for effecting substantive changes in the Saudi regime.

Since the outbreak of the Gulf events, several voices in the Gulf political scene were heard demanding substantive changes in the Gulf regimes in general and in the Saudi regime in particular. This prompted King Fahd to announce on 9 November the adoption of a number of measures which he considered to be important, serving the state's general interests, helping it carry out its tasks in view of the comprehensive development witnessed in Saudi Arabia, and realizing the required integration of responsibility, such as the basic systems of government, the consultative council, and the systems in the regions within the framework of the Islamic faith.

Giving a time frame for such changes, King Fahd said on 9 November: We have taken time to discuss all the aspects that have arisen during the long discussions to implement such measures. Earlier this year, I saw previous and subsequent studies and I am pleased to say that these measures are receiving their final touches and the beginning of their implementation will be announced as soon as they are finally formulated.

The question that was asked in Riyadh and other Gulf, Arab, and world capitals was why Saudi Arabia announced such measures now.

A number of explanations came up in answer to this question.

First, several loud voices in the United States and the West have been questioning the credibility of the argument for defending the familial Gulf regimes, which violate human rights and ignore democracy. These voices say that these regimes are not much different from the Saddam Husayn regime in terms of violating democracy and human rights. These voices were so vociferous and powerful that they influenced the Western public opinion in general, prompting it to doubt the Western governments' credibility and intentions in the Gulf crisis and to suspect that the West's intention was to destroy Iraq's strategic, military, and political infrastructures.

These voices had a great effect on the Gulf and Saudi regimes prompting them to address these voices and appease the public opinion through democratic changes that were announced in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states ruled by tribal families. The aim of King Fahd's call was to address the American and Western public opinions and inform them that democratic changes were upcoming at the appropriate time and in the suitable methods in an attempt to avoid the pressure of the Western public which rejects the Western governments' stand on the Gulf crisis.

Second, when the Gulf crisis started, prior to the outbreak of the war, a state of panic dominated all the Gulf countries at the level of governments and ruling families. The media of these governments and ruling families began to adopt a policy that called for consulting citizens about the defense of their homeland which was threatened by invasion. The question was how? It is true that Gulf citizens relatively lead a life of economic luxury, but allegiance to their governments is very weak because they do not participate in administering the affairs of their countries. Therefore, the indifference shown by the Gulf citizens toward the Gulf crisis was not strange. Moreover, despite all the cases in which citizens appeared to be taking part in adopting a stance toward the crisis, the bleeding which was manifested in funneling funds abroad confirmed the weakness of the Gulf citizens' allegiance to their governments. This was also corroborated by the way citizens ridiculed all the steps adopted by most governments on volunteering and participating in the defense of the homeland. This, however, does not necessarily mean that Gulf citizens do not have an allegiance to their countries, but here we are only discussing the type of loyalty and allegiance demanded by the Gulf governments. For, derision and sarcasm prevailed in all Gulf states concerning the magnitude of propaganda, armament, and Gulf power projected prior to the Gulf crisis, which was later found to amount to no more than television commercials. Moreover, governmental measures declared before the war were not sufficient to prepare the Gulf citizens to participate in the

decisionmaking inside their countries. Even the first people to complete their training at the volunteer camps which were opened were, strangely, from the amirs or shaykhs of the ruling families in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. This angered and disappointed Gulf citizens. The sarcastic comment on this was that, even when it comes to soldiership, they are given precedence, and in defending the homeland on television, they are also the first.

This lack of the Gulf citizens' loyalty to their governments has pushed these governments to announce their intention to carry out some reforms in the future, and not during the crisis.

Third, there are "fragile" political forces, or to be more precise, intellectual groups, that have a heritage of demands for democracy and for making radical reforms in the Gulf countries. The Gulf crisis helped these groups raise their voice to call for introducing genuine democratic changes inside the Gulf countries. Their logic was that the absence of democracy in Iraq had put it in that situation, and consequently the presence of democracy in Saudi Arabia and in the Gulf in general would save these countries from many "Saddams" whether from inside or outside, as they say. These voices, though rare during the crisis, echoed loudly despite all the attempts to impose a news blackout on them during that period.

Fourth, one cannot ignore that the economic boom experienced by the Gulf states, and Saudi Arabia in particular, has ended, and that the Saudi citizen is facing economic difficulties that did not exist during the boom period. These difficulties are a source of worry for him and encouraged him to ask many questions about the future and how to face it in light of the decrease in oil revenues, and the paying of the Gulf war bill. These economic circumstances created a kind of thinking about the political future of these countries. This thinking, although in whispers, could become louder with any new economic circumstances.

So, will there be any future democratic reforms after the war? What form will these democratic reforms take? Will there be political parties to carry out their activities in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states in general? Away from denial or confirmation, there are two trends to answer these questions:

The first trend believes that a host of changes will actually be announced but they will have no impact at all. They will be aimed at absorbing the questions posed by the Western public opinion about the tribal regimes in the Gulf states, and also at absorbing any kind of popular questions about what these governments will give their citizens in return for their support for these governments' policies during the Gulf crisis, and about the reward that will be given to all those who supported them inside, including, of course the groups calling for democracy. This trend stresses that the reforms will not be more than an announcement, and that practically, they will not exist, but will only be aimed at absorbing any questions that emerged during the crisis.

The second trend holds that there will be no democratic reforms in the region in the near future because these reforms are linked to changes in the society on the political and economic level and what is happening now is that these changes have not so far created the required impact, but are still developing, and also because the ruling regimes in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states have tightened their political and economic control and created for themselves a network of interests with internal and external forces. These regimes have also left no room for any popular action, though fragile, to affect the decisionmaking in these countries. Moreover, there are other forces that oppose change and take religion as a cover. These forces stand firmly against any change. In fact, they are ready to clash with the governments themselves if they embark on any step in this regard.

Perhaps the position adopted by the clergy in Saudi Arabia on the women's demonstration for allowing women to drive cars and their call for citizens to kill women because they are whores and spread vice and corruption on earth, as stated in some of their statements, is perhaps the real touchstone according to which the government has measured the stance of these forces which oppose change. Moreover, these forces reliance on religion and on some ruling wings in some Gulf states, drove them to raise their voices higher against any changes which, in their book, are considered secular and against Islam.

So, the proponents of the second trend believe that any democratic reforms inside Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states are linked to societal changes which are to date unclear. Therefore, change at present is impossible.

It is certain, however, that the still waters in the Gulf have run, and that Arab Muslim blood was mingled with the sand and salt waters. Certainly, this blood will be transformed into horrific ghosts that possess strength and momentum enough to produce strong winds that would blow on the Gulf region and shake, to a degree, some peaceful thrones.

Disagreements Reported on Presence of U.S. Forces

JN2404181591 Cairo MISR AL-FATAH in Arabic 22 Apr 91 p 1

[Text] MISR AL-FATAH has learned that strong disagreements have arisen among some members of the ruling family in Saudi Arabia because of the Saudi decision on permanently maintaining the presence of U.S. ground forces on Saudi territories.

Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz told Egyptian officials during his recent talks about the Saudi decision in this regard. The crown prince noted that the presence of these forces would not affect, in any instance, the causes of the arrangements and military and security

relations among Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, to define the scope of the U.S. ground forces' mission.

Finance Minister Discusses GCC Meeting

LD2404223291 Riyadh SPA in English 1236 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Riyadh, April 24, SPA—Muhammed Aba-al-Khayl, minister of finance and national economy, said the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] financial and economic cooperation committee, which concluded its two-day meeting here last night had discussed the development program in the Arab countries.

Speaking to reporters after the end of the meeting, Aba-al-Khayl said the new program will adopt methods that were not used by the development funds before.

He noted that the new program will finance the exports of the Arab countries, extend loans to the private sector for the implementation of investment projects and finance projects to increase food production whether they belong to the private sector, the public sector or both.

Aba-al-Khayl said the financial and economic cooperation committee had reviewed the outcome of the meetings earlier held in Washington by the coordination committee in the presence of the representatives of the GCC member states and the Western countries.

Aba-al-Khayl pointed out that continuation of the meetings of the coordination committee will encourage the Western countries to contribute to the development process in the Arab countries.

Aba-al-Khayl said establishment of joint projects by the private sector in the GCC member states was discussed at the meeting.

A working team comprising the representatives of the GCC Ministries of Finance and Industry will soon meet to discuss this issue, he said.

Aba-al-Khayl pointed out that the undersecretaries of the GCC Ministries of Finance held meetings in the last two days to evaluate the joint Gulf economic work and prepared a report on means for enhancing economic relations among the GCC member states.

The undersecretaries of the GCC Ministries of Finance will meet again next month to resume discussion on the same issue, he said.

Moreover, Aba-al-Khayl said the GCC financial and economic cooperation committe was briefed on a report submitted by the coordinator of negotiations with the countries of the European Community.

For his part, 'Abdallah Bisharah, the GCC secretary general, said the meeting comes in the line of the resolutions adopted by the GCC summit conference in Doha calling for establishment of a development program to finance development projects in the Arab countries and in particular the Arab countries which positively contributed to the liberation of Kuwait.

Bisharah said the GCC ministers of finance and economy had reviewed means for the implementation of development program as well as its financial sources.

It is expected that the capital of the program will amount to ten billion dollars within ten years, said Bisharah.

Bisharah noted that the GCC ministers of finance will meet next August to make the final touches on the skeleton of the program.

The GCC member states will exchange views on the details of the program, he said.

Bisharah described the recommendations submitted by the undersecretaries of the GCC Ministries of Finance on the joint economic activity as excellent, positive and practical.

The GCC minsters of finance have approved these recommendations, he said and added the required arrangements will be taken for their implementation.

He pointed out that the recommendations include removal of commercial and economic barriers in the member states.

Asked about the possibility of unification of the GCC currencies, Bisharah said the governors of the GCC central banks had earlier reviewed means for narrowing the gap of the montetary policy in the member states.

Saddam, Talabani Meet; 'Agreement' Reached

Kurdish Radio Reports 'Progress'

NC2404191091 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1805 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] INA reports that Iraqi President Saddam Husayn met today with a delegation of Kurdish leaders, who included Jalal Talabani, Muhammad Mahmud 'Abd-al-Rahman, Rasul Mamand, and Nechirvan Idris Barzani. According to INA, 'Izzat Ibrahim attended the meeting.

Kurdish spokesmen in exile say that there are indications that the talks are proceeding well. Although the Iraqi Government has not issued any statement on the outcome of the talks, some Arab diplomats in Baghdad have been informed that the talks are making progress.

A spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan says he was in touch with Iraq last night and that the high-level talks that began in Baghdad last week are continuing. [Prime Minister] Sa'dun Hammadi is taking part in these talks. This in itself is a positive indication, but the spokesman said nothing can be said for sure until the talks are over.

The delegation includes four personalities representing groups forming the Kurdistani front. The delegation is demanding widescale autonomy in the Kurdish areas, supported by international guarantees.

Kurdish spokesmen in exile stressed that arrangements have been made with the Iraqi authorities to insure the safety of the delegation. But the spokesmen denied reports that the vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council and the defense minister are being held as hostages in the areas under Kurdish control.

INA Reports Meeting

JN2404120191 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1149 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 24 Apr (INA)—President Saddam Husayn today received a delegation of the sons of our Kurdish people, including Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan; Muhammad Mahmud 'Abd-al-Rahman, secretary general of the People's Democratic Party of Kurdistan; Rasul Mamand, secretary general of the Soicialist Party of Kurdistan; and Nechirvan Idris Barzani, member of the Political Bureau of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan.

'Izzat Ibrahim, Revolution Command Council vice chairman and deputy commander in chief of Armed Forces, attended the meeting.

'Agreement' Said Reached

JN2404161291 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] In Damascus, a Kurdish opposition official has stated that discussions on autonomy for the Kurds that took place in the meeting between Iraqi President Saddam Husayn and the Kurdish opposition delegation headed by Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, have achieved progress, and that an agreement on the basic points was reached during the meeting.

Further on 'Accord'

NC2404192891 Paris AFP in English 1922 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, April 24 (AFP)—Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani, whose rebel group has been battling the Iraqi Government, said here Wednesday that his movement had reached an agreement in principle with Baghdad.

The secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) told a hastily-arranged news conference following talks with President Saddam Husayn that the accord focused on "the normalization of the situation in the Kurdistan region, democracy in Iraq and respect for Kurdish human rights."

He also said that a Kurdish rebel delegation would meet again with the government here next week.

"We still haven't announced the details," Mr. Talabani said, adding that the accord centered on the implementation of a March 11, 1970 agreement granting autonomy to Iraqi Kurdistan.

No Iraqi Mention of 'Agreement'

JN2404202491

[Editorial Report] Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic at 2008 GMT on 24 April in a one-sentence report states that "Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, met at the Culture and Information Ministry this evening with reporters and correspondents of local, Arab, and international news agencies, radio stations, and television networks."

The Baghdad report makes no reference to any Iraqi Government "agreement" with Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani.

Talabani News Conference

JN2504093191 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 0400 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] It was announced in Baghdad last night that an agreement in principle has been reached between the Iraqi Government and the Kurdish leaders for the full implementation of autonomy in Iraqi Kurdistan. The final text of this agreement will be drafted next week. The following is a detailed report:

The agreement reached on Iraqi Kurdistan was announced at a news conference held by Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, in Baghdad yesterday evening following his meeting, accompanied by members of the Kurdish delegation, with President Saddam Husayn. Talabani said the agreement in principle, which followed six days of negotiations between the Iraqi Government and the Kurdish opposition delegation, provides greater autonomy for the Kurds in northern Iraq. The Kurdish leader added that another round of talks will be held next week to draw up the details of the agreement. He said this agreement is based on the implementation of the 11 March 1970 agreement between the Kurds and the central government in Baghdad on Kurdish autonomy.

Talabani said the talks, which were held after a month of preliminary contacts, dealt with four points. They are: improving relations, democracy in Iraq, Kurdish national rights, and the country's national unity. Talabani said: As Iraqis, we support the independence and sovereignty of the Iraqi Government. Together with the rest of the Iraqis, we will try to safeguard the independence and sovereignty of Iraq and take part in rebuilding our country. He said he expected no problems in negotiations over the details of the agreement. He added: My meeting with President Saddam Husayn has given me confidence that we will not encounter major obstacles in the implementation of the 11 March 1970 agreement, which is the main issue. He said: Since that time, I have not sensed such a positive spirit, such a positive climate, and such a positive basis for negotiations on Iraqi Kurdistan.

Appealing to Kurds to return home, Talabani said: We want to stay in Iraqi Kurdistan and not leave it. He expected the new round of talks in Baghdad, in which Mas'ud Barzani, leader of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, will play a prominent role, to encourage Kurds to return to their homes. He added: We have received promises from President Saddam Husayn and others that all Iraqi Kurds will be secure. He went on to say: We believe that democracy will be the principal guarantee for the national goals of the Kurds.

Asked about the presence of U.S. forces in northern Iraq, Talabani said: As soon as a final agreement is reached, all foreign forces should withdraw from Iraq. He, however, added: We prefer the presence of UN forces, but until this is achieved we do not object to the presence of other forces to protect the refugees.

He said the two sides will later discuss the issue of the city of Karkuk, which is not an official part of Iraqi Kurdistan. He added: Karkuk is an Iraqi city and we are not seeking to divide Iraq. We will discuss the issue of Karkuk later. He said he expected the Kurds to be represented in the central government in Iraq as soon as agreement is reached.

Iraqi Prime Minister Sa'dun Hammadi is expected to hold a news conference this morning to announce the results of negotiations with leaders of the Kurdish parties.

UN Envoy Protests More U.S.-Saudi Overflights

JN2404135991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1228 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] New York, 24 Apr (INA)—Iraq has officially informed the United Nations of the fact that the Saudi and U.S. military planes and U.S. helicopters continue their activities in Iraqi airspace.

Iraq's permanent representative to the United Nations said in a memorandum to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar that the total number of U.S. and Saudi activities for 21-22 April 1991 amounted to 163 sorties divided among 80 formations and three individual sorties at a speed of 720 km per hour and an altitude ranging between six and eight km.

He pointed out that the airplanes were identified as F-15's and F-14's, and their flights were concentrated over the regions of Baghdad, al-Ramadi, Hadithah, Tikrit, Karbala', al-Kut, al-Samawah, and al-Nasiriyah.

Iraq's permanent representative to the United Nations clarified that the objectives of the U.S. and Saudi aircraft are reconnaissance, monitoring, and harassment. This is done by flying over populated residential areas.

The Iraqi diplomat said in his memorandum to the UN secretary general that two helicopters belonging to the alliance forces landed next to the bridge control areas near al-Samawah oil refinery at 1830 on 10 April. The crew dismounted from them and seized five security guns belonging to the guards and then ordered them to withdraw.

He pointed out that a U.S. helicopter violated Iraqi airspace at midday the next day in the Suq al-Shuyukh region and headed toward the city of al-Nasiriyah. It then retreated toward the U.S. sectors.

The INA correspondent in New York noted that Iraq's representative asked the secretary general to circulate the two memorandums as documents of the Security Council.

Radio on 21-22 Apr 'Sorties'

JN2404170991 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1400 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Iraq's UN permanent representative addressed a memorandum to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar on U.S. flights over Iraqi territory. The memorandum reads:

1. U.S.-Saudi activities for 21-22 April 1991 amounted to 168 sorties divided among 80 formations, and eight individual sorties at a speed of 720 km per hour and at an altitude ranging between six and eight km.

2. The aircraft were identified as F-15's and F-14's, and their flights concentrated over the regions of Baghdad, al-Ramadi, Hadithah, Tikrit, Karbala', al-Kut, al-Samawah, and al-Nasiriyah. The objective of these activities is reconnaissance, monitoring, and harassment. This is done by flying over populated residential areas.

The INA correspondent in New York said that Iraq's representative requested that this memorandum be distributed as one of the UN Security Council's documents.

22-23 Apr Actions Protested

JN2504065591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0632 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] New York, 25 Apr (INA)—Iraq's permanent representative to the United Nations has addressed a memorandum to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar on the U.S.-Saudi air activity over Iraqi territory. The memorandum states:

1. U.S.-Saudi air activity for 22-23 April 1991 amounted to 83 sorties divided among 41 formations and one individual sortie at altitudes ranging from 5.5 to 9.0 km and at speeds of 720 km per hour.

2. The aircraft were identified as F-15's and F-14's. Their flights concentrated over the regions north and east Baghdad, al-Ramadi, al-Razzazah, al-Kut, al-Suwayrah, and al-Hashimiyah. The objective of these activities is monitoring and harassment.

The INA correspondent in New York said Iraq's representative requested that this memorandum be distributed as a UN Security Council document.

Memorandum Protests Iranian Cease-Fire Violations

JN2504094791 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0705 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] New York, 25 Apr (INA)—Iraq's permanent representative to the United Nations has sent a memorandum to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar containing new Iranian violations of the cease-fire agreement between Iraq and Iran. Following is the text:

Your Excellency: Acting on my government's instructions, and in addition to our letters, the latest of which was dated 24 April 1991, I am honored to address you, informing you of new Iranian violations of the cease-fire between Iraq and Iran. This is as follows:

1. At 0400 on 21 April 1991, a force coming from Iranian territory and estimated at two infantry companies supported by two rocket launchers and 10 120-mm mortars attacked forward Iraqi units in the southern sector using the west bank of the Fish Lake. Some 180 shells fell on the area.

2. At 0300 on 22 April 1991, an infantry company-strong group coming from Iranian territory attacked Iraqi units in the same sector. At the same hour, Iranian forces opened fire at forward Iraqi units in the same sector, using light weapons and 60-mm mortars. Some 120 shells fell on the area. At 0430, Iraqi forces in the area came under Iranian shelling in which tubular bombs and mortars were used for half an hour. Thirty rockets fell on the area.

3. At 0430 on 22 April 1991, the Iranian side sent an infantry company-strong force toward Qutaybah police station in the central sector. Using various types of weapons, the force opened fire on Iraqi units in the area. At 1800, a force coming from deep inside Iran shelled forward Iraqi positions in the southern sector, in the area of al-Harthah, in al-Basrah, using 82-mm mortars. Seven shells fell on the area. At 1130 on 23 April 1991, the Iranian side fired three artillery shells at forward Iraqi positions in Hawr al-Huwizah in Iraq's southern sector.

These daily repeated violations of the provisions of the cease-fire between the two countries prove the Iranian Government's insistence on intentionally trying to harm Iraq's sovereignty and security. My country's government stresses anew the responsibility of the Iranian Government for all damage caused by these violations and for their future consequences.

Please circulate this letter as a Security Council document. Please accept my best wishes.

U.S. Accused of Harming Kurdish Cereal Harvest

NC2404143691 Paris AFP in English 1420 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, April 24 (AFP)—The United States is jeopardizing Iraq's cereals harvest in Kurdistan by preventing crop-spraying helicopters from overflying the region, a senior official charged here Wednesday.

"The United States has rejected an Iraqi request to launch its crop-spraying campaign against insects, thus aiming at destroying our food and starving our people," said 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Sabbagh, the Iraqi minister of agriculture and irrigation.

He told reporters here that Iraq had received a negative response from Washington on Tuesday for a recent request to spray crops in the Kurdistan region where U.S. troops are deployed to help Kurdish refugees fleeing the Baghdad government.

The United States has barred Iraqi fixed wing aircraft and helicopters from flying north of the 36th parallel—an area covering most of Iraqi Kurdistan.

"For 10 years, we have been carrying out this operation with helicopters from the Ministry of Agriculture, to eradicate insects coming from Turkey, the Soviet Union and Iran, and which multiply during this season," Mr. al-Sabbagh said.

Kurdistan's arable land covers an area of a million hectares (2.5 million acres) and yields some 70 per cent of Iraq's total production of wheat and barley.

The minister called on the United Nations and international organizations to denounce the U.S. measure, which he said "threatens the current season and that of next year."

"If the crop-dusting operation is not carried out in the next week to 10 days at the latest, the cereals harvest will be lost and the losses could reach 300 million dollars," he added.

Mr. al-Sabbagh said Iraq would not be opposed to the presence of U.N. observers to supervise the crop-dusting.

Political Party, Media Reforms in Constitution

JN2404164091 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1535 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 24 Apr (INA)—National Assembly Speaker Sa'di Mahdi Salih has said that the new Constitution is one that is integrated in its chapters and articles. He added: It covers all aspects of life in a way that befits the current phase, as well as the next one.

In a statement to INA, the National Assembly speaker went on to say: We are eager to honor our commitments to our people. It is hoped that we will resume work in the near future to finalize the draft Constitution to pave the way for referring it to the people.

The National Assembly speaker said: Work to finalize the draft Constitution was started earlier. The draft Constitution was discussed at various levels: by the Revolution Command Council, the leadership, the National Assembly, and also by parties and professional associations. Numerous remarks and proposals were made about this draft Constitution. It was hoped that these proposals and remarks could be considered in amending the Constitution, which could then be put forward to the people in a general popular referendum at a suitable time. The circumstances of the aggression against our militant country, however, constituted a real obstacle that prevented us from finalizing the draft Constitution.

The National Assembly speaker clarified that the next task after the Constitution is issued is to define how political parties can be formed. These parties are expected to be formed in addition to the parties that already exist, after the Constitution, which gives special attention to the freedom of opinion, is approved. The Constitution will also pass a law for the press which befits the demands of the current and future state to bolster freedom of opinion and publication and guarantee the effective participation of the media in revealing the facts, whether in their positive or negative aspects. Without such measures, we cannot achieve any real progress in our lives. The process of pointing out the negative phenomena and demanding that they be dealt with is not the duty of only officials; it is the duty of the people, and one way for the people to express their opinion is through the press.

He pointed out that progress continues to finalize a draft law on the press and to enrich it with the opinions of specialists in this field through the National Assembly, so that it will be formulated in a manner that achieves the required positive results.

Regarding action on party pluralism and whether parties that used to previously come under the banner of the national front [not further identified] could make a comeback, National Assembly Speaker Sa'di Mahdi Salih said party pluralism is based on the Constitution, and its regulations and cannot contradict them. As for the parties that used to exist, their fate will be left to the people who will look into all the facts regarding them. They alone will have a say regarding those who were on the side of the homeland during its time of crisis. He affirmed that the opportunity will be open to all good Iraqi citizens to form the parties which they think will help them serve the homeland.

Cabinet Discusses High Prices, Food Imports

JN2404155491 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1510 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 24 Apr (INA)—Prime Minister Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi chaired the Council of Ministers weekly session at noon today.

In a statement to INA at its conclusion, Culture and Information Minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi said the council discussed the problem of high prices and its causes. He added: The reasons include the halt of commodity imports caused by the economic blockade enforced against Iraq for the last nine months, whether the imports were consumer goods or production requirements, and the war of aggression which has hampered the smooth flow of fuel and electrical supplies to production facilities. This war also hampered the transportation of goods and the movement of citizens.

The culture and information minister pointed out that the council noted the steady progress in the procurement of fuel supplies and restoration of electrical services, as well as future measures regarding this. The minister added: The council also reviewed practical measures—taking into account the country's present capabilities—to alleviate high prices. The council also stressed the importance of enlightening citizens about these measures through the media, as well as through marketing agencies.

The minister also said the council reviewed the steps the Ministry of Trade has taken to improve the status of food imports as well as the foodstuffs situation, which are being distributed according to ration cards. He said the council has decided to continue the price freeze on products in the public and mixed sectors for one more year.

Further on Meeting

JN2404191391 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Excerpts] The Council of Ministers held its weekly session under Prime Minister Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi at noon today. In a statement to INA at the conclusion of the session, Culture and Information Minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi said the council discussed the problem of higher prices and its causes. [passage omitted]

The minister said the Council of Ministers welcomed the measures adopted by the Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization and the Oil Ministry to improve the production and distribution of oil products and electricity in the very near future. He noted that the Council of Ministers welcomed the effect this will have on reducing production and transportation expenses and, consequently, prices. He added that the council also directed the General Cooperation Union intensify vegetable sales and present an integrated plan in one week on expanding its activity. The council also stressed that the role of central markets in selling vegetables and fruits should be expanded. He explained that the council decided to continue the freeze on prices of the private and mixed sector products for one more year.

The minister of culture and information said the Council of Ministers directed Baghdad municipality to allow farmers and salesman to use vacant lots inside Baghdad city and other towns for free to sell fruit and vegetables to give citizens goods at reasonable prices.

Concluding his statement to INA, the minister of culture and information said: In view of the importance of the problem of higher prices, the Council of Ministers decided that discussion of this issue should remain open and be followed up from time to time to find the best solutions.

National Assembly 'Eager' To Alleviate Problems

JN2404175491 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Excerpt] National Assembly Speaker Sa'di Mahdi Salih has affirmed that as a representative of the Iraqi people, the National Assembly is eager to take part in resolving all citizens' problems in the current phase through coordinating and cooperating with all sides, headed by the executive authority, the Council of Ministers.

In a statement to an INA correspondent, the National Assembly speaker said: Having discussed citizens' current economic and living conditions, the Assembly has decided to entrust its permanent committees with assembling proposals and opinions presented by the Assembly members, each in accordance with his specialization. The Assembly also has decided to set down proposals and opinions that constitute suitable solutions, which will be discussed during a meeting between these committees and the chairmanship committee of the Assembly. He said these solutions will be presented to competent authorities.

Sa'di Mahdi Salih added: In its capacity as a legislative authority, the National Assembly cannot be a substitute for ministries. He noted, however, we have the right to propose and promulgate laws, and we have the right to monitor them. We also have the right to host the prime minister and ministers for discussions and to submit views on tackling any issue of interest to citizens, he said. He affirmed that the sessions to be held by the National Assembly next week will witness serious efforts in this regard. He affirmed that citizens' current living conditions and the effect that has on low-income citizens cannot be dealt with through increasing wages. He affirmed, however, that these conditions can be handled by providing supplies at appropriate prices that help stablize living conditions. He indicated that raising wages will create additional inflation, which will only benefit the owners of production and will greatly harm low-income people. [passage omitted]

Ba'th Official Urges Speeding Reconstruction

JN2404160991 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1400 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Comrade Mizban Khadr Hadi, member of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party Regional Command and secretary of the Euphrates Ba'th Party Organization Bureau, has said that great Iraq—under leader and symbol President Saddam Husayn—is working in accordance with rapid plans to bolster the pan-Arab and human principles of the glorious 17-30 July revolution. During a meeting with party cadres and heads and members of professional and popular organizations in Babil Governorate, Comrade Hadi called for redoubling fruitful efforts and adopting new plans of action to boost efforts to achieve a better future and expedite the reconstruction of what was destroyed by the aggression of the U.S.-Atlanticist-Zionist alliance and the criminal gangs of demagoguery.

During the meeting, which was attended by the secretary of the Babil Ba'th Party branch, Comrade Mizban Khadr Hadi explained that the new stage in our proud Iraq requires the pooling of all sincere nationalist efforts to perform future tasks and to detect all obstacles facing the implementation of plans in order to create a bright picture of the creativity and diligence of the Iraqi individual under the revolution.

The secretary of the Euphrates Ba'th Party Organization Bureau held two similar meetings in Karbala' and al-Najaf Governorates. The meetings were attended by the governors of Karbala' and al-Najaf and by secretaries of the commands of the party branches of the two governorates.

INA Reports Figures on Returning Kurds

23 Apr: 179,421 Returned

JN2304203391 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1943 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Northern Iraq, 23 Apr (INA)—The number of Kurdish citizens who have returned from the border areas with Iran and Turkey to their homes in the cities and villages in the north today reached 179,421 citizens. An INA correspondent in northern Iraq said that the number of Kurdish citizens who returned to their homes greatly increased at the beginning of this week after they were reassured about the return of normal life to the north of the homeland and the facilities provided by the local authorities there.

193,269 Cited 24 Apr

JN2404175591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1658 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Northern Iraq, 24 Apr (INA)—The INA correspondent in northern Iraq has reported that the number of Kurdish citizens who returned from the border sectors with Iran and Turkey to their residences in the cities and villages of the north to date has totalled 193,269.

Local authorities have provided all the necessary facilities for the return of Kurdish citizens.

The beginning of this week has witnessed a big increase in the numbers of Kurdish citizens who returned to their residences, after they have been reassured about the return of normal life to northern Iraq.

Editorial on Measures To Curb Inflation, Prices

JN2404192691 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 22 Apr 91 p 1

[Editorial: "What is Required Is Stopping the Wave of Excessive Inflation"]

[Text] Citizens' complaints regarding the excessive inflation burdening them, especially those with low incomes, are no longer a secret. It has become a serious problem, and the time has come to confront it and find a quick, successful solution before it spreads out of control.

Such a confrontation represents, under the abnormal circumstances our dear Iraq is confronting, a national task that takes first priority with government officials, trade experts and economists. They are required to play a prominent role in dealing with the unprecedented wave of extreme inflation the citizens are suffering which threatens to skyrocket unless experts deal with it and eliminate it at its source.

No two differ in their belief that some of the causes behind this problem go back to the circumstances created by the aggressive war and the black market it left behind. It also left behind meddling with prices and an irresponsible course of action which exploits the situation to make quick, illegal get-rich schemes at the expense of needs for foodstuffs and other goods now greatly in demand. This is is a normal result of war, but it is not permanent and can be contained. To eliminate this situation we must confront its causes and repercussions without delay. Its results should not be constantly blamed on the aggressive war.

Serious action is required to stop this wave and find solutions to eliminate the various reasons that led to it, thus preventing it from choking the citizen.

We believe such action is not merely the responsibility of specialized government circles, although the responsibility is there. It is the responsibility of all those concerned with the market events, the economic circumstances that influence the market, and those trade aspects affected by it. These people include specialized economists, food industrialists, agricultural goods producers, and all those who deal with the market, as well as those institutions and societies which deal with trade traffic and imports.

The campaign we are urging must be comprehensive and sensitive to the national duties required at this delicate stage—when Iraq has emerged from the tribulation of the 30-nation alliance's aggression.

A solution to this wave of inflation must not be left up to circumstance. We should not wait for it to solve itself, depending on the whims of the market. Those concerned should not dump the responsibility on others to find comprehensive solutions. Solving this problem requires a vanguard effort which concerned state institutions will initiate and steer, with the party by their side. The party is required to play a tangible role in confronting this problem, which is harming and worrying the people. Those quarters concerned with production and marketing—whether supplying, selling, or importing—are also asked to contribute responsibly and work together with a high sense of national alertness, not only to remove the price nightmare, but also to put an end to soaring prices burdening the Iraqis, especially the low-income, who are the pillars of work and production in the homeland.

It is a great national duty, and confronting it identifies the nature of our commitment, all of us, and the honesty of our responses to calls of the great homeland, everyone's homeland.

Undoubtedly, we are a confident people who are aware of our duties and will respond to them.

Opposition Kills 'More Than 30' Government Troops

NC2404184391 Tehran International Service in Arabic 1730 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Last night Iraqi opposition forces carried out an operation in al-Musharrah City in Maysan Governorate, killing more than 30 of the Ba'thist forces' personnel and seizing quantities of arms and ammunition.

Reportage on Four Israelis Arrested in Cyprus

Ministry in Contact With Detainees

TA2404133891 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1300 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] The four Israelis who were arrested yesterday in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, have been remanded into custody for eight days. They asked the court to allow them to ask the Israeli Embassy to help them with their legal defense.

The four were captured yesterday in the basement of the Iranian Embassy in Nicosia as they were trying to bug the embassy's phones. They claimed in their defense that one of the women had been taken ill and that they had been looking for a bathroom for her. The Cypriot police will press charges against them. They are suspected of conspiring to commit a crime, possessing burglary tools, attempting to tap a telephone line, and disobeying a policeman's orders. The four are: 40-year-old David Dabi, 33-year-old Ran Tzuf, and Anna Dolgin and 'Amit Litwin, both aged 28.

Our correspondent Yitzhaq Feller has been told by the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem that the ministry has been in contact with the Cypriot authorities to check the matter and that if necessary the four will be given assistance, just like any other Israeli citizen.

Four Not 'Official' Elements

TA2404153991 Tel Aviv Educational Television Network in Hebrew 1400 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Excerpt] Foreign Ministry officials in Jerusalem said this evening that the four Israelis who were arrested in Cyprus are not connected with official Israeli elements. The Israeli Consul in Cyprus has already met the four, who hold regular passports. [passage omitted]

[Later on in the program, in a live interview by Dan Margalit, Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is asked whether the Israeli Foreign Ministry is looking into the matter. Netanyahu replies: "I have nothing to add to the Foreign Ministry communique. At the moment, we are gathering more details. Nevertheless, our communique remains in effect."

[Asked whether the four had been working for Israel, the deputy minister replies: "You heard our communique. I have nothing else add to it at the moment."]

'Embarrassment' Over Arrests

TA2504044091 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0400 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] The Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem is consulting with Cypriot authorities concerning the four Israelis detained in Nicosia on suspicion of trying to wiretap telephones at the Iranian Embassy. Jerusalem said last night that the four will receive legal aid if they request it.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that the affair has caused embarrassment in Jerusalem. The four Israelis continue to be in remand in Cyprus since the Nicosia court refused to release them on bail. The judge said that since they are foreigners they might escape. During the court proceedings it was said that the four arrived in Cyprus early in the week, lived in two luxury hotels in Limassol, and were due to leave Cyprus tomorrow. Legal sources in Nicosia say that Cyprus does not have a law banning wiretapping.

Sources: Bessmertnykh Not Coming to Israel

TA2504083291 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 25 Apr 91 p A2

[Report by Avino'am Bar-Yosef]

[Text] Sources in the Soviet Foreign Ministry have notified Arye Levin, Israel's consul general in Moscow, that USSR Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh has no intention of visiting Israel during his upcoming tour of the Middle East.

Yesterday Levin contacted a senior Soviet Foreign Ministry official asking for details concerning the dates of the visit to make the necessary preparations to receive the foreign minister in Israel. In a report he relayed to Jerusalem, Levin notes that the official was surprised by the questions and said that Bessmertnykh's itinerary does not include Israel, and that reports to that effect were apparently the result of a misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

Political sources in Jerusalem believe that it is possible that in their meeting, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker will try to influence his Soviet counterpart to change his position and include Israel in his tour.

Military Concerned by Syrian Scud Upgrade

TA2504043691 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 0400 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] A senior military source says that Syria is making every effort to improve the performance of its Scud C-type missiles. The Voice of Israel's military correspondent quotes the source as saying: Damascus has succeeded in upgrading the missiles' capability of carrying a warhead, and this is cause for concern.

Pessimism Expressed About Baker's Mission

TA2504043391 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0400 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Excerpt] There is pessimism in Jerusalem regarding the chances that Baker's Middle East mission will succeed after Saudi Arabia's withdrawal from the regional conference idea and Syria's insistence on an international peace conference under UN auspices.

Our correspondent Arye Golan reports that in the wake of that evaluation senior Likud sources voiced sharp

criticism about the timing in the expansion of the settlement of Talmon since it has permitted the United States to point an accusing finger at Israel, while in fact it is the Arab states which have negative positions. [passage omitted]

Ministry Official on Timing of New Settlements

TA2504111091 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1000 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] There is pessimism in Jerusalem about the prospect of the Baker mission, but the director general of the Prime Minister's Office, Yosi Ben-Aharon, has expressed the hope that the United States will not be discouraged, and will press on with its peace efforts. In an interview with our reporter Jack Katzenell, Ben-Aharon said the right formula can be found and peace is attainable.

Senior Likud circles have criticized the timing of the establishment of the settlement Talmon Bet. Secretary Baker also criticized the decision to establish the settlement, and the U.S. ambassador in Israel delivered a protest to the Foreign Ministry.

However, Prime Ministry Director General Ben-Aharon said the settlement of 10 or 15 families is a marginal issue, at a time when thousands of Kurds are dying and Palestinians are being persecuted in Kuwait.

[Begin recording] [Ben-Aharon] Israel cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, say to any Jew that he is not permitted to live in any part of this land which we call Eretz Yisra'el—the Land of Israel, west of the River Jordan. And at the same time, because of American sensitivities—which we appreciate and we understand—we have undertaken a policy, which is really a discriminatory policy with regard to Jews, that we will not direct Russian immigrants to the settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza, because the United States and Congress will hopefully participate in providing us loan guarantees to help provide housing for the immigrants from the Soviet Union.

[Katzenell] Whatever the rights and wrongs of the issue, do not you think it would have been more prudent for Gush Emunim, or whichever organization is involved, to wait a few weeks before establishing Revava or Talmon Bet?

[Ben-Aharon] You know, the timing of Revava and Talmon is arguable, and some will say that at least outwardly it would appear as if we are deliberately offending our friend the United States. But we are trying to maintain a very open and honest attitude toward our allies, and it would not have served any real purpose to hide anything, because Jews are living and will continue to take up residence in these areas, in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza, and the timing is really irrelevant. We can point to the precedent of the achievement of peace with Egypt, which was done notwithstanding the fact that there were settlements, and settlements have continued being established in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza during the entire course of the negotiations toward the establishment of peace with Egypt. [end recording]

Spanish Paper Interviews Moshe Arens

PM2404153491 Barcelona LA VANGUARDIA in Spanish 14 Apr 91 pp 6-7

[Interview with Defense Minister Moshe Arens by Henrique Cymerman in Tel Aviv; date not given]

[Text] Tel Aviv—Behind a map of the Middle East and an Israeli flag, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens received LA VANGUARDIA in his shirtsleeves in his Tel Aviv office, the office in which he slept throughout the Gulf war.

[Cymerman] There is talk of some agreements between Israel and the United States which have enabled James Baker to continue the peace process on the Arab side.

[Arens] We observe the U.S. attempts to assist the progress of the peace process and are glad about this. We hope that the secretary of state will be able to secure agreements with the Arab countries, especially in the area of direct talks with Israel. These should make it possible to start the process.

[Cymerman] How do you view the final agreement with the Palestinians?

[Arens] Our opinion—which is shared by the United States and, I believe, by Egypt, although it is a long time since we met with them—was decisive at Camp David: If we wish to make headway in the process, it is not necessary to discuss the final agreement now; rather, it is necessary to conduct negotiations on the intermediate agreement and only afterward negotiate the final agreement.

[Cymerman] Is it true that the problem of Jerusalem will be held over until last, and that the Palestinians of East Jerusalem will not take part in the negotiations?

[Arens] We have not discussed Jerusalem with James Baker, since it is part of the State of Israel.

[Cymerman] In the Cabinet this week, the foreign minister supported the formation of a Palestinian delegation and the prime minister a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. What is your opinion?

[Arens] It depends on what kind of framework for talks we are talking about. If we are referring to a regional meeting in which the Arab countries will take part, the population of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza do not constitute a state and therefore cannot be regarded as such or hold the same status.

[Cymerman] So it is possible that they would be included in a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

[Arens] It is possible.

[Cymerman] Have you discussed this with the U.S. secretary of state?

[Arens] I did not discuss this option with the secretary of state, but it is possible that the prime minister or the foreign minister did so.

[Cymerman] Why does Israel say an outright "no" to the PLO?

[Arens] The PLO presumes to speak on behalf of the Palestinian diaspora—not just representing the population of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. 'Arafat claims to speak on behalf of 5 million Palestinians and demands the right of return. They want the descendants of the Arabs who left the country 42 years ago to return to Israel. Everybody can see that that means a state's annihilation, and no country has yet emerged that is prepared to conduct negotiations on its annihilation.

[Cymerman] Is Faysal al-Husayni, the leader of the local Palestinian delegation which met with James Baker on his two visits, vetoed by Israel?

[Arens] As far as is known, Faysal al-Husayni is a resident of the State of Israel. He cannot represent the Arab population of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. As a resident of East Jerusalem, he is like any other Israeli resident.

[Cymerman] So who are the Palestinians in the territories whom Israel accepts as interlocutors?

[Arens] The State of Israel's peace initiative calls for elections, and there is an Israeli pledge to negotiate with anybody who is elected.

[Cymerman] Is Israel willing for the representatives to be not elected in elections but appointed?

[Arens] I can tell you that I personally am not a great supporter of representatives who are appointed or appoint themselves, although we are prepared to listen if Baker has proposals to that effect.

[Cymerman] The press says that Baker is waiting for a reply as to whether Israel is prepared to freeze the growth of settlements in the territories.

[Arens] In the first place, I have not heard that demand on Baker's part. The secretary of state knows very well that we believe that settlement in Judea and Samaria is a basic right of the Jewish people. So we have no intention of forbidding the Israelis to settle in those territories.

[Cymerman] Are the settlements increasing?

[Arens] At present, around 100,000 Israelis are living in cities and villages in Judea and Samaria, and this is a community which is living and therefore growing. Children are being born and relatives and friends are joining. These are things which cannot be frozen and which we have no intention of freezing.

[Cymerman] Is Israel sending new immigrants to the territories?

[Arens] No. We have announced that, at this stage, this will be our policy.

[Cymerman] What is the stance presented by Israel to Baker on the issue of the "land for peace" formula?

[Arens] Look, as far as I know, the secretary of state did not raise the "land for peace" slogan. He did not do so at his meeting with me. According to what I have been told, he did not raise it at his meetings with the prime minister and the foreign minister, either.

[Cymerman] Does Israel make Soviet participation in the regional conference conditional on the establishment of full diplomatic relations between Moscow and Jerusalem?

[Arens] Yes.

[Cymerman] Do you believe that the most right-wing sector of the Likud could halt the peace process?

[Arens] No, I do not believe so. I can see no reason for that. I did not see that intention or pressure at the Cabinet meeting this week.

[Cymerman] Were there disagreements?

[Arens] Unimportant disagreements, in my opinion.

[Cymerman] On the one hand deportations and a tougher line in the territories, and on the other hand measures to make the Palestinians' daily life easier and the release of 1,000 Palestinians from the prisons, are being approved...

[Arens] There is no contradiction between the two things. We are combating the sectors which practice violence and kill—whether Jews or Arabs, it does not matter—and on the other hand we are trying to make life easier for the population, who mostly do not support violence. The expulsion of those who provoke violence is one of the most effective punishments in the struggle against killing and violence, and we find ourselves forced to use it.

[Cymerman] Some personalities, such as the leader of the opposition, believe that there is not much time to avert the next war. The United States wishes to create a new order in the Middle East. Following the Gulf war and the latest talks with Baker, are you more optimistic about this?

[Arens] I do not believe that war could break out in the short term. I hope that all the Arab countries have learned the moral of the war: It is clear that violence does not pay and that you must not go to war and endanger human lives. This has been assimilated by the Arab world, and this gives rise to greater optimism about the prospects for peace.

[Cymerman] What other conclusions did your ministry and the Army draw from the war?

[Arens] It is still too early to draw final conclusions. One of the main problems is the difficulty of ending the danger of missile launching. After 42 days of war and

constant attempts by the U.S. and allied air forces to eliminate that threat, success was not total.

[Cymerman] How is it possible that a national government did not react to 39 Iraqi missiles? Was this a result of U.S. pressure or of the definition of Israel's interest?

[Arens] There is no ideological element in this. Every government must act in accordance with its definition of its interests. On the one hand the allied forces took action to destroy the Iraqi military force. That was an Israeli interest—not just a U.S. interest. On the other hand, Iraq does not have a common border with Israel. We warned Iraq not to send forces into Jordan, which could have caused direct contact between the Iraqi and Israeli armies. It is a good thing that our message was received and Saddam did not deploy forces in Jordan. We were aware of the coalition formed by President Bush—with great success—and did not wish to endanger it or Schwarzkopf's operation. Near the end, when we knew that the missile threat had not yet been eliminated and concluded that the danger of the coalition's disintegration had diminished, we were very close to carrying out an operation of our own.

[Cymerman] Was there U.S. pressure to avert it?

[Arens] We have friendly relations, and there is no cause for pressures. Since their air force was active in the area where we were to operate, there was cause for coordination.

[Cymerman] What would have happened if Israel had had to fight alone with the countries on the eastern front?

[Arens] We would have won.

[Cymerman] There are government sources which say that you would be prepared to negotiate a reduction of your nonconventional arms. Is this true?

[Arens] You have not heard me say a word about this.

[Cymerman] You say that your opposition to a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza was intensified by the Gulf war. Why?

[Arens] It became clear that the territory of Judea and Samaria is vital for Israel's defense. Imagine what would have happened if that territory had not been in our hands and the Iraqi Army had entered it during the war. And we are opposed to this because Jordan is the Palestinian state, except in name.

Attempted Terrorist Attacks Said Increasing

TA2804155291 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Report by military correspondent Amir Fink]

[Text] A senior military source has said that in the past month there has been an increase in attempted terrorist attacks from across the border. Five along the Lebanese border and additional incidents along the Jordanian border. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces], says the senior source, operates as well as ever, and yesterday the Navy intercepted a civilian ferry en route from Sidon to Cyprus. Several terrorists were taken off the boat and are currently undergoing questioning in Israel. The military source reported that there have recently been several attempts to use firearms in attacks in the territories, and that there is currently a considerable number of active terrorist squads that possess weapons. They may use these weapons.

[Earlier in the same bulletin, IDF Radio reports on a Knesset debate on 24 April on the recent increase in infiltrations from Jordan in the Jordan Rift Valley. Defense Minister Moshe Arens is quoted as telling the Knesset plenum that "the Jordanian authorities are making efforts to prevent infiltrations, but this is not enough." He is also reported to have said that "the defense establishment is currently examining the various options open to Israel."]

Editorial Urges U.S. To Continue Peace Efforts

TA2604170291 Jerusalem Al MISHMAR in Arabic 22 Apr 91 p 2

[Editorial: "The Main Foundations of Political Action"]

[Text] The political moves have now entered a decisive stage in light of the statements about the results of Baker's visits, particularly his last one. Either the peace process will succeed, or the region will return to the point of explosion and the catastrophe of a continuing conflict.

The world is witnessing great and historic changes brought about by a new economic and political era. Our region is part of this world and, therefore, it must be inclined toward peace even though obstacles may appear in the path of the peace efforts. The requirements of this era dictate that all those concerned should intensify their efforts to remove these obstacles and end the state of conflict and tension.

The Palestinian side, in line with its conviction, fully insists on striving toward and continuing on the path of peace. It will not retreat from this lofty aim. The peace offensive constitutes one of the most important foundations on which Palestinian political action is based. The Palestinian people and their leadership will not allow certain parties to dissuade them from continuing on the path of peace.

The second foundation in the Palestinian moves is continuing the serious and urgent work toward building a strong relationship with the Arab brothers. This relationship must not remain afflicted by rifts and fractures. In this context, we should keep knocking on Egypt's door so that relations between the Palestinian and Egyptian sides will return to normal and even grow stronger, especially at this stage. The rift with Egypt constitutes a danger to the Palestinian position and its gains.

The third foundation is represented in the need to consolidate relations with European countries, whose

desire to take part in the peace process is rejected by Israel. Hence, as a response to the Israeli rejection and in an attempt to break the barriers set up in the face of the Palestinian moves, it is necessary to build firm and principled relations with Europe. This step will generate support for the Palestinian position and will complete the circle of siege around the Israeli position. This will force Israel to participate seriously in the peace process.

In reiteration of our concern for peace, we hope that the U.S. Administration will continue its serious political action for the sake of peace and will use its weight in all the arenas to force Israel to remove all the obstacles which it is placing in the search for peace. We assume that this is something of which Secretary of State James Baker is well aware.

PLO Source: Council Not To Reject Initiative

TA2404173791 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Arabic 1630 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] A senior PLO official, who insisted on remaining anonymous, said that at the end of its meetings in Tunis today, the Palestine Central Council decided not to reject U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's initiative on convening a peace conference in the Middle East. He added that the PLO calls for observing Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 as well as the principle of land for peace.

PLO Attempts To Move Offices to East Jerusalem

TA2404131191 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 24 Apr 91 p 4

[Report by Roni Shaqed]

[Text] In recent weeks, the PLO has been pressuring economic and social institutions and organizations to move their offices to East Jerusalem.

Territories sources have said that the PLO intends to establish East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine and to enhance its status in the eyes of the Palestinian public and the world.

The decision on this course of action was made after Israel refused to include Jerusalem in the negotiations and in the wake of recent political contacts in the course of which Israel has refused to include a representative from Jerusalem as a member in the Palestinian delegation for negotiations.

As part of their plan, PLO activists are attempting to transfer to Jerusalem the offices of the Palestinian Trade Unions offices situated in Nabulus; the offices of the High Education Council, located in Ramallah; and the offices of the Agricultural Marketing Association and the Farmers Unions, also in Nabulus.

Leaders From Territories Discuss Process

TA2404114491 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 24 Apr 91 p A4

[Report by Yizhar Be'er]

[Text] In his first public appearance since his release from administrative detention, Radwan Abu-'Ayyash yesterday called on Palestinians not to miss a historic opportunity to take part in the political process. He said that Palestinians must not insist on the format of future negotiations, and should rather concentrate on their content.

Abu-'Ayyash added that no Palestinian would accept anything less than an independent Palestinian state headed by the PLO. He proposed to base the Palestinian thinking on PLO resolutions as published in its declaration of independence.

Abu-'Ayyash, chairman of the Journalists Association in the Territories, was addressing an open discussion yesterday at the al-Haqawati Theater in East Jerusalem, where a series of encounters has been held recently between officials from the territories and the Palestinian public—mainly intellectuals and professionals. The aim of the encounters are to strengthen the contact between the Palestinian public and the Palestinian notables representing the territories in political and international debates.

In the past, criticism had been leveled at the absence of such contact and at the fact that the masses have no idea of the sociopolitical conceptions of notables such as Faysal al-Husayni, Hanna Sinyurah, Zuhayra Kamal, and others.

Yesterday, the debate—moderated by journalist Da'ud Kuttab—revolved around the desirable Palestinian stands. As a rule, the speakers from the territories expressed positions more flexible than those that PLO spokesmen, including Yasir 'Arafat, present abroad and those that emanate from the PLO Central Council debates in Tunis.

Another participant at yesterday's debate was Dr. Mamduh al-'Akr, who was also released from detention recently. He said: "What matters to the Palestinians is the goal, not the means. We must overcome mental obstacles. The Palestinians must stop being afraid of proposals. They should regain their self-confidence and talk even when sitting opposite enemies."

The third participant, Dr. Mahmud Jarallah, reviewed the attempts at negotiations made since 1948. He asserted that the Palestinians must maintain a rigid framework of principles and rules in every political process.

Gaza Notables Criticize 'Arafat, Urge Cooperation

TA2304160891 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Apr 91 p A2

[Report by Yizhar Be'er]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Palestinian notables from Gaza, who were not identified and who were defined as "nationalists who belong to the Unified National Command of the Uprising," yesterday sent a memorandum to the PLO's Palestinian Central Council, currently convened in Tunis. It attacks the meetings notables from the territories held with Secretary Baker.

In their letter, the notables refer to American involvement in the Gulf war and U.S. goals in the region, claiming that the recent U.S. initiatives are meant to break apart the Palestinian ranks and ignore the PLO, while destabilizing its status as a representative of the Palestinians.

The memorandum calls on the Palestinian masses to unite and reorganize to put off the "American plots." The memorandum includes an appeal to the nationalist figures in the territories not to take individual initiatives and to base all political activity on PLO guidelines, according to the principle that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The writers of the memorandum also call for increased coordination between the territories and Palestinians abroad.

This appeal expresses the opinion of elements inside the PLO—in the territories and outside—who oppose the way the dialogue with the Americans is being held, as decided by 'Arafat. Other factions in the PLO, such as the Communist Party, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Nayif Hawatimah's faction of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, also express vehement opposition to the meetings with Baker in their current form. The opposition claims that the delegation from the territories was given the green light to meet Baker by 'Arafat personally, but no democratic decision on the issue was made by any PLO forum.

[Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 22 April, in a similar report by correspondent in the territories Amir Hay, adds that the memorandum complains about "the lack of cooperation between the various factions operating in the territories. It also claims that there is bias in favor of the Judaea and Samaria branches of the Unified National Command of the Uprising in terms of aid and decisionmaking. The memorandum also criticizes PLO activity in the territories."]

Incidents in Territories; Employment Rules Eased

TA2304092491 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Apr 91 p A2

[Report by Yizhar Be'er, Eytan Rabin, and ITIM]

[Text] Four IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers were lightly injured yesterday in separate incidents in the territories. Near Avraham Avinu Synagogue in Hebron stones were hurled at a group of Jewish women and children who live in the neighborhood. A soldier manning a post nearby sustained slight head injuries. He was treated at the site.

A Janin resident shot a soldier and slightly injured him, evidently by mistake. The man said that at around 2130 he heard voices and suspected that people were going to harm him. He fired at the source of the noise. The IDF spokesman confirmed yesterday that a soldier had been injured in Janin under those circumstances.

In the Gaza Strip two soldiers were hurt by rocks thrown at them during clashes with local residents. The soldiers were taken to Barzilay Hospital in Ashqelon for treatment. One of them was discharged, and the other remained in the hospital to receive additional care.

Four residents were injured in the Gaza Strip: three in the city of Gaza and another in the Khan Yunus refugee camp. Palestinian sources reported street clashes on Gaza's main street and in the Jabalyah refugee camp.

Yesterday several thousand Gaza laborers left for Israel. The defense establishment has started to implement the more lenient measures toward the residents of the territories. As of yesterday inhabitants of the territories are being allowed to work throughout the Dan District in all the sectors except hotels. From now on every employer will be allowed to employ four or more laborers from the territories. The earlier regulation required that laborers from the territories be hired in groups of 10 or more. The defense establishment is reviewing additional measures to alleviate the difficulties that residents of the territories have in working in Israel.

Three vehicles were torched early yesterday morning in Jerusalem. A Ford Cortina belonging to an Arab resident of al-Tur was set on fire near the local boys school. An ice cream van belonging to a Jew was set ablaze in the Qiryat Menahem neighborhood of Jerusalem. A Canadian Embassy Chevrolet was torched in East Jerusalem's Wadi al-Jawz neighborhood.

The Lod military court yesterday sentenced two East Jerusalem youths who threw firebombs at Egged buses on the road to Bayt Sahur last year. They were given eight years in prison plus a four-year suspended sentence. According to the military prosecutor, that was the second time Ahmad Muhammad Abu-Tir and Ra'fat 'Abd-al-Ra'uf 'Alyan Abu-Tir, both 19, attacked buses. Neither attack caused any injuries or damage.

'Arif Hasan Abu-Sultan, a 25-year-old resident of Rafah who was found guilty of the murder of a security prisoner at the Qezi'ot detention facility, was given a life sentence. He told the court that he does not regret the deed. The murder was committed against the backdrop of suspected collaboration with the Israelis.

[Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew on 23 April, in a report on page A7 by 'Ezra Yanuv, Hanan Schlein, Rahamim Ya'aqov, and Uri Binder, says that "a homemade charge exploded yesterday in Tulkarm." It also reports that "masked individuals yesterday murdered Mahruz Faris, 50, in Khan Yunus, and immediately fled. Another group of masked persons assaulted a 25-year-old Dayr al-Balah resident, seriously injuring him."]

Health Ministry Denies Drinking Water Polluted

TA2504111991 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 25 Apr 91 p 9

[Report by Ora Namir and Nurit Arad]

[Text] The agriculture minister's adviser's warning that the water we drink is both contaminated and carcinogenic is inaccurate, the Health Ministry announced in reaction to the alarming reports.

The Health Ministry admitted that the subterranean water has grown a little more polluted, but drinking water is supplied exclusively from wells whose water is tested and is found to be clean and good.

"There is constant watch for germs or carcinogenic elements in the water," said the communique.

The Health Ministry firmly denied that information on the subject is being withheld.

Abu-'Ayyash Banned Without Special Permission

TA2504111891 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1005 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] Radwan Abu-'Ayyash, a Palestinian leader who conferred with Baker last week, will no longer be able to enter Israel without special permission. Following the administrative detention in which he was incarcerated in recent months Abu-'Ayyash received a green ID card. Our correspondent Arye Gus recalls that the holders of such ID's have criminal or security records and are prevented from entering Israel. Abu-'Ayyash received special permission to enter Jerusalem for work purposes.

Trade With PRC Begins Secretly

TA2304100991 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 23 Apr 91 p 11

[Report by economic correspondent in Jerusalem Gad Li'or]

[Text] The PRC and Israel have had commercial relations for a few months, away from the media's eye.

Although a large part of the merchandise has been sent via Hong Kong, the two countries have also traded directly, with the help of foreign airlines.

It has been learned that Israel exports, among other things, canned food and medicines to the PRC, while the latter supplies certain raw materials to Israel. For the time being, the Chinese have made the trade relations conditional on their remaining secret.

A Foreign Ministry official yesterday confirmed that commercial relations indeed exist, but the economic ministries refused to comment on the issue.

It should be pointed out that a scientific Israeli legation has been operating in China for the past year, while a representative of the Chinese Tourism Ministry has been operating in Israel.

Sources in Jerusalem think that those legations may be accorded consular status within a few months.

'Arafat Tells Ibrahim of PLO Arms Withdrawal

NC2404184091 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1630 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Statement issued by the Lebanese Communist Action Organization on 24 April]

[Text] Lebanese Communist Action Organization [LCAO] Secretary General Muhsin Ibrahim continued his contacts from Sidon City in southern Lebanon with the Palestinian leadership in Tunis all day today. At 1400 Yasir 'Arafat contacted Ibrahim and informed him of the text of the political and military resolutions adopted by the Palestinian leadership on the Lebanese situation. 'Arafat asked Ibrahim to convey these resolutions to Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi.

The LCAO secretary general contacted the presidential headquarters and spoke with Minister Muhsin Dallul, conveying to him the text of the aforementioned resolutions and asking him to pass them on to President Ilyas al-Hirawi and the Lebanese Cabinet.

Following is the text of the Palestinian political and military resolutions, as passed to LCAO Secretary General Muhsin Ibrahim by PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat:

The Central Council stresses its welcome of the measures aimed at a final end to the Lebanese crisis, including the extension of the Lebanese state's sovereignty over all of the Lebanese Republic's territories and ending the Israeli occupation of parts of southern Lebanon in accordance with Security Council Resolution 425.

The council expresses the PLO's willingness to make positive, brotherly, and constructive contributions to the efforts aimed at safeguarding the Lebanese-Palestinian brotherhood, providing security and protection for the camps of our Palestinian people in Lebanon against the Israeli aggression, and securing for our people, within the context of Lebanese sovereignty, their political and social rights and the right to struggle.

The council also urges the PLO Executive Committee to open a dialogue with the Lebanese Government to work toward this end.

At a meeting held on the periphery of the Palestinian Central Council sessions chaired by Yasir 'Arafat and comprising all faction leaders, the Palestinian leadership had adopted the following decision unanimously: The PLO's heavy and medium weapons shall be withdrawn from all points within the area of the Lebanese Army deployment, scheduled to take place on 30 April 1991, and shall be transferred to sites of confrontation with and resistance to the Israeli occupation.

Al-Hirawi Chairs Cabinet, Decision Adopted

NC2404210591 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Statement by Information Minister Dr. Albert Mansur after a cabinet meeting chaired by President Ilyas al-Hirawi in Beirut on 24 April—recorded]

[Text] The cabinet met today. At the beginning of the meeting, the committees charged with studying the various topics relating to the implementation of the al-Ta'if accord, especially the committee on the disbandment of the militias, briefed the cabinet on their activity.

Following deliberations, the cabinet decided:

1. To implement the cabinet decision of 28 March 1991 on the disbandment of militias and the collection of weapons according to the conditions, specifications, and dates set in this decision, which applies to all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias without discrimination or exception and regardless of any consideration.

2. To implement the cabinet decision to find suitable solutions to assimilate Lebanese youth who were members of the disbanded militias according to the requirements to be decided by the cabinet in light of the proposals of the committee charged with studying this subject.

3. To authorize the Lebanese army and the internal security forces to deploy as of 30 April 1991 according to the plan adopted on 28 March 1991. The Lebanese army and the internal security forces will preserve security in their areas of deployment in accordance with the measures taken under Cabinet Decision No.1 on 16 January 1991 and implemented in the Greater Beirut area.

The cabinet then discussed the items on the agenda and adopted the appropriate decisions. One of these decisions is to form a committee composed of Ministers Khatchig Babikian, 'Ali al-Khalil, Zahir al-Khatib, and Roger Dib to propose a new wage scale for state employees and to submit proposals to increase state revenues. The committee has been given two months to complete its work.

The cabinet then agreed to earmark $22 million to cover the expenses of calling up 10,000 recruits for military service.

Meeting Detailed

NC2504081091 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] According to press reports this morning, a long debate on the disbandment of militias occurred during yesterday's cabinet meeting. Reports also say that Minister Walid Junblatt left the meeting an hour before it ended.

Meanwhile, Ministr Roger Dib expressed reservations about the issue of the Palestinian weapons in Sidon and

the south. He expressed his desire to consult with the Lebanese Forces command before adopting a stand. This prompted Minister Michel al-Murr not to present the report of the ministerial committee that is charged with following up the implementation of the decision on the disbandment of the militias. The committee, which is chaired by Minister al-Murr, met at the temporary presidential headquarters before the cabinet meeting.

AL-NAHAR cites Lebanese Forces sources as saying that Minister Dib's reservations about keeping the Palestinian weapons in Sidon and the south was based on his belief that the south issue must come before any other. The sources added that because the Lebanese problem began in the south, the solution also must begin there. The solution will begin with solving the problem of the Palestinians and their weapons.

The paper says that Ministers Nabih Birri and Muhsin Dallul rebelled against the cabinet decision because they opposed the handing over of Palestinian weapons today.

The cabinet decisions stipulate that the weapons of the Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias must be handed over without delay.

Resistance Attacks Lahd Patrol; Israeli Shelling

NC2304183591 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1730 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] An Islamic resistance group attacked a Lahd militia patrol on the al-Rummanah-Radar road, killing or wounding all patrol members.

A statement by the resistance said that the group ambushed the patrol and subjected it to a barrage of machine-gun fire. The resistance men returned safely to base after a 15-minute clash. The statement added that witnesses observed the bodies of two agents this morning and that ambulances were seen evacuating a number of wounded people.

After the ambush the occupation forces and their agents shelled [placename indistinct] from their positions on al-Rummanah Hill, while the Lahd militia mounted a large-scale combing operation in the area.

Israeli Aircraft Overfly Southern Areas

NC2404171791 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1630 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] A formation of Israeli warplanes flew at medium altitude over the southern areas and as far as Sidon City at 1250 today.

Baker, Al-Shar' Review Talks With Reporters

JN2404125591 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1115 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker held a news conference in Damascus this morning. The conference was attended by correspondents of Arab and foreign news agencies and by Baker's accompanying media team.

At the beginning of the news conference, Baker said: Yesterday, we held detailed and expanded talks with President Hafiz al-Asad and Faruq al-Shar'. I believe that the talks were useful and that they largely focused on the form of the conference.

Al-Shar' said: I can say that James Baker's talks with President Hafiz al-Asad were useful and constructive during the long hours of these talks, which centered on various issues and were based on a better understanding of the various aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine question. We also agreed to be in constant touch to continue consultations and talks.

Answering a question on the form of the proposed conference, and whether the conference will be a ceremonial one, an opening session, or whether it will be based on a suitable structure, with a prominent UN role; and if the views of the two sides are closer, Baker said: We are working to solve these problems in a very constructive way. Asked if this answer meant a solution was not reached, Baker said: When I say that we discussed issues in a constructive way, does it mean that we did not achieve anything new?

Baker added: You are aware that I will not hold negotiations through the press, because we want these negotiations to succeed. These are serious negotiations and we had better not hold them through the media. I know that this may not satisfy you, but this is dictated by circumstances. I would like to say that we are working on solving these problems in a constructive way that has made some progress. I cannot speculate on the extent of this progress.

Mr. Baker was asked that, since he and President Bush know that Israel refuses to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and refuses to implement UN resolutions, what the next steps were, in his opinion. Mr. Baker said: I will leave Damascus for Moscow today to meet the Soviet foreign minister to discuss this issue—mainly to discuss only this problem, and not to discuss other topics, as is usual in such meetings between the U.S. secretary of state and the Soviet foreign minister. I would like to say that in your question you alluded to the establishment of the Jewish settlement. I must tell you that we were disappointed this morning to learn that a new settlement was being established in the occupied Arab territory. I believe that this action will obstruct peace, making clear the fact that it is easier to obstruct peace than promote it. The establishment of this settlement will certainly not help push our efforts forward because we are interested in peace.

Answering a question on the direct, effective U.S. role in the peace process and the possibility that this role will result in peace, Baker said: I certainly hope so. I can say that this time I found new elements, a new approach, and a new desire following the Gulf crisis to deal with these complicated and unusual problems with serious determination. I have in fact seen this.

Baker was asked: You are going to Moscow to discuss the peace process with the Soviet Union. Have you agreed on preparations for this conference? Baker said: We have agreed on this point, but we have not reached this stage yet.

Baker was also asked: You say that you are not going to the Soviet Union to talk primarily about the U.S.-Soviet summit, disarmament, or the Gulf; you say we have not reached the point at which we can begin peace talks in the Middle East. Do I understand from this that the United States alone cannot activate this process?

He answered: Indeed, you have understood me. We will go there because they will participate in supervising these efforts, which we hope will succeed. This is very important, because we will exchange information on all that takes place. We recorded all that took place during our tours in the region in order to sit with the Soviets and present them with an oral and written report on the outcome of these tours. Now the time has come to sit face-to-face. I repeat that we have achieved a serious thing, therefore, we will go there.

Baker was asked: Since you are going to supervise the peace talks, are you going to return to the Middle East?

He answered: It is premature to say that. I can say now that I will meet with the Soviet foreign minister, then I will return to Jerusalem. We have spent enough time here, and I think that the time has come to return to the United States for at least a short time, although there are no definite plans to return. It is time for me to return and present a report in person to President Bush. Our current work schedule stops at this point, as I noted this morning.

Al-Shar' was asked: Is Syria now ready to participate in the peace conference? And if it isn't, why not?

Al-Shar' answered: In Syria, we have been calling for a peace conference for years. Of course we will participate in a peace conference in which the United States, the Soviet Union, the European Community, and the United Nations participate.

Al-Shar' was also asked: Do you only object to the form, or do you have other objections?

He answered: I have said that all parties directly concerned with the conflict will participate in the conference, including the Palestinians.

Here, the reporter asked al-Shar': Will the Palestinian representation be independent?

Al-Shar' answered: We have no objections to an independent Palestinian representation. I would like to clarify this point by saying that it is up to the Palestinian people to decide their representatives to this conference.

Al-Shar' was asked: Will the regional conference be held under the auspices of the United Nations?

Minister al-Shar' answered: First, the conference is no longer a regional one. A conference in which the United States, the Soviet Union, the European Community, and the United Nations participate cannot be called a regional conference. Second, it is clear that a conference which enjoys this nature and characteristic has international dimensions. It must be clear to all that we will call this conference a peace conference. I have listed the parties that will participate in this conference.

Al-Shar' was asked: You had indicated the parties directly concerned. What about Saudi Arabia, which has very close borders to Israel?

He answered: The Saudis themselves have announced that they do not want to participate in such a conference. They said that they are not directly concerned because they are not a confrontation country, which would oblige them to participate in the aforementioned peace conference.

Replying to a question on Syria's opinion regarding the commitments Israel must make to participate in the peace conference and express its sincerity toward peace, al-Shar' answered: In light of Israel's statements yesterday, we are absolutely not optimistic. I would like to stress to you that President al-Asad spent more than nine hours with Baker in a bid to probe the U.S. commitment and position, because we know in advance that if we heed the Israeli position, there will be no real peace. They speak of war rather than peace. They are leading the region to war in light of such statements. They are not moving toward peace; yet we want peace.

Mr. Baker interjected, saying: I would like to add that there is a high degree of agreement by the parties that the objective of convening such a conference is to achieve a comprehensive settlement based on UN Security Council [UNSC] Resolutions 242 and 338. It follows that these parties have their different interpretations of what exactly is required. That is why they want to hold direct bilateral talks, so that one can define and determine during these talks one's conception of the ways to achieve a good peace. This is what settling the conflict in accordance with UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338 means. As a matter of fact, all of these countries, the United States, and the USSR are attempting to achieve this. I hope that all this has become clear by now.

When asked about Syria's conception of a UN role in such a conference, whether the conference will convene for one session [marratin wahidah] or whether it would be in continuous session, Minister al-Shar' answered by saying: The conference will not convene for one session. It will be in continuous session. As for the United Nations, it would play an important role in this conference.

Al-Shar' was also asked: If no agreement is attained by the parties concerned, will the United Nations then be asked to resolve the conflict? He answered: We should not forget that the United Nations will not be alone there. The United States, which announced a clear commitment in this regard, not to mention the very important statement President Bush made to the U.S. Congress on 6 March, will also be there. Moreover, the United Nations, which has for a long time been in possession of the files and resolutions on the conflict should be consulted, especially during the conference deliberations.

When asked about his conception of a UN role in the conference, Mr. Baker answered: One of the issues we are discussing with the various parties concerns the role the United Nations would play. I would settle for this right now, as this topic is still under consideration.

Asked whether there was a way to bridge the gap between the Israeli view, which calls for convening the international conference for one session only, and the Syrian view, which states that the conference should be in continuous session, Mr. al-Shar' said: What is important here is the objective, which is the attainment of a comprehensive and just settlement in the region.

Mr. Baker left Damascus at 1315 today following a three-day visit to the Syrian Arab Republic. He was seen off at Damascus international airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', the head of Protocol at the Foreign Ministry, and the U.S. ambassador in Damascus.

Further Al-Shar' Comments

JN2404165291 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1530 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Excerpts] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker held a news conference in Damascus this morning. [passage omitted]

Al-Shar' added: What is important here is the objective, which is the attainment of a comprehensive and just settlement in the region. This settlement should be based in particular on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. It is also well known that the Palestinian people, who have been suffering for a long time, must attain their national rights. Syria is committed to helping the Palestinian people attain their national rights. Whether we disagree with the PLO or not, these rights have nothing to do with relations between Syria and the PLO. We hope to attain the Palestinian people's rights. When we discussed the formula and format of the conference, that was because it was related to the essence of the matter at hand. If it had nothing to do with the essence, then the issue would not concern us much. For example, when we speak of a regional conference, that means a conference dealing with trade, economic, or environmental issues. When we speak of a conference on peace,

however, that means establishing peace in the region, which concerns not just the region only but also the entire international community. Consequently, that is our objective for holding this conference. The problem is not related to bridging the gaps. It is the issue of the principles on which we insist, because the object of this conference is to establish a comprehensive peace in the region. [passage omitted]

Al-Shar' said: I agree with Baker that we have made important progress. I also believe that the road is still a long one before us and that the difficulties and problems are caused by the Israeli side. [passage omitted]

Peace Based on 'Law of Justice' Supported

JN2404144791 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: Anyone who listens to the statements made by Israeli officials these days will think that what is taking place in the region now in terms of international efforts and in-depth dialogue on the crisis in the region is aimed at kindling the conflict, not at curbing and ending it. The international will to achieve a just and comprehensive solution to the crisis is moving in one direction, while the Israeli intentions are moving in the opposite direction.

On one occasion you hear someone in Israel declaring, without hesitation, that the international conference is banned, and that Israel will not approach it. At another time, you hear someone announcing from his position in the Israeli political machine that the UN resolutions which are the basis of the international efforts to launch the peace process are viewed by the Israelis differently from that of the Arabs and the world. At another time, an Israeli official stands here and another stands there to reiterate Israel's intention to maintain an Arab land here and another Arab land there, to continue the settlements, and to repress and pursue the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

Apart from all this, there are Israelis who do not hesitate to propagate the deceptive idea that there is a need to put pressure on the Arabs to respond to peace proposals and to rush toward the bilateral negotiations which Tel Aviv is playing with for the sake of partial solutions that will dissipate Arab rights again instead of restoring them, and relinquish the values of justice instead of consolidating their foundations.

Putting pressure on the Arabs in accordance with the Israeli concept only means forcing the Arabs to accept the Israeli aggression—in the past and in the present—so that a fait accompli will exist on the ground, its sole aim being to quash the Arab rights to territory and sovereignty. The final objective is capitulation, which we have always rejected and which we will continue to reject at all times.

After Israel has openly announced all these clumsy ideas, the international community and all parties concerned with the crisis in the region are dutybound to ask: Why does Israel reject the convening of the international conference, the UN auspices of this conference, and arbitration in accordance with international laws to solve this complicated conflict, which has been threatening the region's security for more than 40 years? If Israel—as it declares through its leaders and its experts in politics and war—wants to keep the land of the Arabs, increase its settlements on the land of the Arabs, and escalate its repression and pursuit of the Palestinian Arab people, ignoring their rights to security and sovereignty over their national soil, what will the United Nations do, with or without the peace conference? What will the international community reap from its efforts, which have intensified in the region today more than before? In which direction should the international community put pressure so that the world will rejoice over a just peace in the region—toward the Arabs or toward Israel?

Syria, which has never bargained over a right or agreed to any international or regional changes to relinquish rights or territory, is the same Syria which today announces that it still maintains the same positions—for a just and comprehensive peace, not for capitulation; for the UN resolutions, not for the law of the jungle, behind which Israel is hiding; and for the international community's efforts to end the conflict and avert its dangers from the region as long as these efforts are moving in accordance with the law of justice.

'Concrete Positions' Needed for Peace

JN2404200991 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1545 GMT 24 Apr 91

["Palestine broadcast": "Abu-Salim's Talk" feature]

[Text] God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you. Making efforts toward peace and demonstrating a commitment to establish it in the region, as well as acting seriously and supporting all serious efforts aimed at establishing peace, is a legal, humanitarian international responsibility, which every honest man in the world should assume and shoulder according to his position, capability, and circumstance.

It is necessary from a legal, humanitarian, and moral standpoint that this commitment to establish peace, working toward it, and supporting any serious effort toward this end be based on full understanding of the nature and causes of the Arab-Zionist conflict. This commitment should also stem from the belief in justice and the dedication to support and back this belief, and from total rejection of injustice, aggression, falsehood, and committing oneself to oppose and eliminate them. This is because all international, humanitarian, and moral principles; norms, and charters clarify and emphasize the foundations, bases, and needs that should be available—whether to express a serious commitment to achieve peace or to make them the basis for achieving peace. Likewise, all international, humanitarian, and moral principles, norms,

and charters define the bases for achieving a just peace regarding any problem, conflict, or dispute. These bases are manifested in removing injustice and aggression and their results, because they denote aggression, usurpation of rights, including people's rights to self-determination, returning things to their status prior to the aggression, and punishing the aggressor.

As for our cause, the cause of Palestine, and our conflict with the Zionist enemy, the causes of the conflict are crystal clear. These causes are well known and clear from the historical accounts and geographical features which shaped the region prior to the Zionist invasion and aggression against Palestine and the region. Add to these facts a body called the United Nations, which has its principles, charter, and resolutions. The entire international community has agreed to make the United Nations the judge and arbitrator, and make its resolutions the international, legal, and humanitarian basis for resolving problems, disputes, and conflicts on the international arena. We all know that this international body has issued several resolutions defining the international and legal basis for terminating this conflict. According to the UN view, charter, and resolutions, it has defined the basis needed to achieve just peace.

It is axiomatic that anyone who seeks to support any efforts to achieve peace in the region should at least believe in the resolutions of international legitimacy and be committed to these as a guide for achieving peace in the region. It is also axiomatic and a well-known fact, which has been endorsed by the international community and confirmed by the UN position and arrangements, that responsibility—whether toward being committed to the resolutions of international legitimacy or toward acting and shouldering one's responsibility to entrench these resolutions as a basis to end problems, disputes, and conflicts on the international arena—varies according to capabilities, powers, circumstances, and tasks assigned to people by the international community. On this basis, it is only natural that all peoples should be asked to work to achieve peace in the region on the basis of the belief in the resolutions of international legitimacy and being committed to them in proportion to their responsibilities and capabilities. This is axiomatic and natural. Some, or all, superpowers of the UN permanent members should declare their commitment to seeking a just peace, or their commitment to working to achieve a just peace. It is also natural and axiomatic that Arab voices be raised to ask these parties to play a role with a greater understanding of Arab rights, and to really express a serious commitment to achieving a just peace in the region. Above all, we stress that the Arab word or the Arab voice will find a positive, effective response to peace efforts inasmuch as the Arab situation is strong and capable of asserting to the entire world its capability, determination, and seriousness to achieve a just peace in the region. This has been the principle which Syria has constantly adopted and asked others to follow, in addition to asking them to express this real commitment by concrete positions and actions.

Paper Stresses UN Role for Regional Peace

JN2504074791 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0445 GMT 25 Apr 91

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Why Are We Adhering to a UN Role, and Why Are They Evading It?" AL-BA'TH writes in its editorial today that the diplomatic flurry in the region over the past several weeks has now entered the stage of direct confrontation. The paper stresses that restoring Arab rights is the essence of the solution and is the only way to end the longstanding explosive situation. Intentional neglect of these rights is an obstacle to which the Zionist entity clings, driven by its illusion that it can impose the fait accompli and win both land and peace at the same time.

The paper adds: When Israel's rulers insist on holding a sham conference under the name of regional conference, from which the United Nations and its resolutions and principles are excluded, they are trying to impose their twisted logic of rejecting world legitimacy, violating UN resolutions and its role, and entrenching the fait accompli on the whole world.

AL-BA'TH adds: We in Syria adhere to the UN Charter, role, and resolutions because we are for right and for international law. We have never violated international law, rebelled against the world community, perpetrated aggression, or stood against peace. When we adhere to UN resolutions, we adhere to peace, to its conditions as set by the United Nations, and to the UN method of achieving it—the clear and explicit Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 344.

AL-BA'TH goes on to say: Syria wants peace; we have always said this unequivocally and through the leader of this nation, President Hafiz al-Asad. We are not advocates of war; we want our rights and lands, and we want to maintain our dignity and pride. No peace can be established on the basis of occupying lands of others and denying their rights.

AL-BA'TH concludes: It is urgent and necessary that the international reaction to Israel's rebellion and defiance be consistent with what occurred during the Gulf crisis. The Arab voice must be loud and resounding on the fateful and decisive developments that determine the present and future of all Arabs.

In a commentary, AL-THAWRAH discusses the same subject. It says that despite the momentous contacts and consultations in the region to establish firm foundations for the new inclination toward a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its central issue, Palestine; Israel rejects, in word and deed, everything that might provide a clear starting point for a just and lasting peace.

AL-THAWRAH adds: With this tumult of events, it should be said that Syria always abides by and acts in accordance with its pan-Arab principles. Syria does not

concede rights or sell out the higher interests of the nation. Syria is working for a just and comprehensive peace based on the implementation of UN resolutions on the issue, especially Resolutions 242 and 338. The mechanism was determined by UN Resolution 344; namely, a conference to bring about just peace under full auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the concerned parties in addition to the United States, the Soviet Union, and the European Community.

PRC Delegation Arrives, Bilateral Ties Viewed

JN2404172591 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1515 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] A round of official talks was held at the Central Command of the National Progressive Front [NPF] today between the NPF delegation led by Vice President and NPF Deputy Chairman Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Masharqiah and the delegation of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference [CPPCC] led by Gu Mu, deputy chairman of the CPPCC National Committee. The talks were attended by Fayiz Isma'il, Safwan Qudsi, and Daniel Ni'mah, members of the NPF Central Command. The talks were also attended by members of the Chinese delegation accompanying Gu Mu and the PRC ambassador in Damascus.

The two sides reviewed the basic tasks of the NPF and the CPPCC and ways of bolstering bilateral relations in the interest of the two peoples in the two friendly countries. They also discussed issues of mutual interest in the national and international fields. Both sides' views were identical regarding these issues.

Gu Mu, chairman of the Chinese delegation, expressed his appreciation for the great and distinguished role shouldered by Syria on the Arab and international levels and the prominent position it enjoys under the leadership of struggler leader Hafiz al-Asad. He voiced his country's support for the struggle waged by the Arab masses to liberate the occupied Arab territory, recognize the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, and achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region in accordance with Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Dr. Mashariqah expressed his confidence that the Chinese delegation's visit will contribute to developing cordial relations between the two friendly peoples. He lauded the positions taken by the PRC in support of the just Arab causes.

The Chinese delegation arrived in Damascus last night on a visit of several days to the Syrian Arab Republic. The delegation was received by Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, Fayiz Isma'il, Safwan Qudsi, and Daniel Ni'mah.

The Chinese delegation today visited the liberated city of al-Qunaytirah.

Iranian President Praises Ties With Syria

JN2504063091 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0415 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran—President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani, has described Iranian-Syrian relations as strategic, excellent, and a model of good ties between two world nations. In a statement to a SANA correspondent in Tehran, Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed appreciation for Syria's positions toward Iran. Syria, he said, is a friendly and faithful country that supported the Iranian Islamic revolution since its victory and even during the Iraq-Iran war, which some tried to portray as an Arab-Persian war.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani said the views of Syria and Iran on many regional and international issues are identical. Cooperation between the two countries on issues of the region and the world is continuing, he added. He stressed the importance of the visit he will pay to Syria shortly and said that in light of the circumstances in the region, meetings with the Syrian leadership must be intensified. Events take place daily, and they require contacts and consultations between the two countries at the level of presidents, he said.

The Iranian president said that during President Hafiz al-Asad's latest visit to Tehran, which took place before the Gulf war, we held useful and productive talks and agreed on cooperation between the two countries over a certain period of time. After the visit, he added, new developments emerged, and in light of the situation in Iraq and the region, the new regional and international issues must be discussed.

Al-Asad Receives Iranian Commerce Minster

LD2504080291 Tehran IRNA in English 0612 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] Damascus, April 25, IRNA—Iran's Commerce Minister 'Abdol Hoseyn Vahaji, currently here at the head of a delegation, met with President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria on Wednesday.

The latest developments in the Persian Gulf region and Tehran-Damascus ties were discussed in the meeting.

Vahaji arrived here Wednesday on a six-day visit.

President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani is to leave for Syria next Saturday on a three-day official visit at the invitation of President al-Asad.

Khaddam Meets Minister

JN2404191791 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1645 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Damascus, 24 Apr (SANA)—Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam received at 1700 today Iranian Minister of Commerce 'Abdol Hoseyn Vahaji and the accompanying delegation, in the presence of the Iranian ambassador in Damascus.

They discussed the situation in the region and bilateral relations.

Al-Shar' Receives Iranian Ministry Official

JN2504131991 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1115 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' received this morning Mohammad Kazem Khonsari, director general of the Arab East and Northern Africa Department of the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The meeting was attended by Ahmad al-Hasan, Syrian ambassador in Tehran; 'Abd-al-Wadud al-Atasi, head of the Asia Department; Hasan Akhtari, Iranian ambassador in Damascus; and Mahmud Hashemi, head of Syria and Lebanon Department at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Mr. Khonsari conveyed a message to the foreign minister from Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The attendees also reviewed the program of the visit President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani is scheduled to make to Syria, and the topics he is likely to discuss with President Hafiz al-Asad.

Afghanistan

Islamabad Reports Kabul Troops Fleeing Gardeyz

BK2404163691 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] In Afghanistan, Kabul troops are reported to be fleeing Gardeyz, headquarters of Paktia Province, and many of them are defecting to the mujahidin. According to the reports, during the past week about 150 Kabul troops reached (Helmund) near Gardeyz with their arms and ammunition and surrendered to mujahidin.

Rebels Say Afghan Jets Bomb Asadabad 24 Apr

BK2504010491 Hong Kong AFP in English 1724 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Islamabad, April 24 (AFP)—Six Afghan jets bombed the resistance-held city of Asadabad Wednesday, four days after it was shattered by a reported Scud missile attack that claimed hundreds of lives, mujahidin sources said.

The jets heavily pounded several districts late in the afternoon, said Hayatullah, an official of the mujahidin's Islamic government in the region, adding that casualty figures were not immediately known.

The attack was the first major air strike by the Soviet-backed Kabul government against mujahidin this year, he said.

Asadabad is capital of eastern Konarha Province, which has been controlled by the Pakistan-supported Afghan resistance for more than two years.

Sources said the Afghan warplanes apparently targeted a bridge in the suburban Sarkano District, a key link on the main highway leading to the Pakistani border seven kilometers (four miles) away.

Resistance leader Abdul Wudood [name as received], quoting a radio message from the Konarha administration, said the bombing was heavy but the bridge was intact.

Statement Assails Pakistani 'Adventurism'

LD2404205291 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT 24 Apr 91

["Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Afghanistan dated 24 April"]

[Text] As has been announced many times, the military circles of Pakistan are stubbornly and shamelessly embarking on interference and aggression against the people and sovereignty of the Republic of Afghanistan. The Government of the Republic of Afghanistan has presented a great deal of irrefutable evidence and documents, showing Pakistani intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, to the world public and international organizations.

The Pakistani militarists have not only trained, financed, and encouraged Afghan extremists in continuing the war and bloodshed in Afghanistan but have also dispatched Pakistani spies and armed men to our country to destroy and kill our people. The joint invasion by the Army and militia of Pakistan, together with Afghan armed extremists, against the city of Khowst explains the hostile adventurism of the Pakistani militarists toward the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan, of which all our compatriots and the world's public are well aware. So far the Pakistani side has violated the articles and paragraphs of the Geneva accords on 13,532 occasions, to which the attention of the relevant UN organisations and the Pakistani authorities has been drawn by 1,885 notes issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. By sending messages and issuing statements addressed to the UN secretary general and heads of states and governments concerning interference by the Pakistani militarists and their violations of the Geneva accords and the UN Charter, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has asked them to prevent such aggressions and violation.

However, these aggressions and interventions by the Pakistani militarists, far from ceasing, have gone even further. For example, two armed Pakistani mercenaries, namely Ashteyaq Ahmad, son of Mushtaq Ahmad, and Tabeq Sedigi, son of Abdul Odud, inhabitants of Rawalpindi, equipped with rocket launchers and automatic machine guns, were captured on 23 April in Lowgar Province during a mopping-up operation carried out by the units and subunits of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Afghanistan.

In strongly denouncing once again such interventionist and aggressive actions, which are against all accepted international norms and standards as well as against the provisions of the Geneva accords, the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan is asking the military circles of Pakistan to refrain from repeating such adventurism; otherwise the heavy responsibility and irreparable and dangerous consequences stemming from such actions will rest on the Pakistani Government.

India

Further Reportage on Punjab Situation

Detainees To Be Released

BK2104044991 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] The Punjab government has agreed to release all detainees held under state government's orders in and outside the state against whom there are no severe charges. The release will follow the guarantee of good conduct of the detainees by the village panchayat [council] of the village leaders concerned. According to a spokesman of the Punjab Raj Bhavan [Governer's House] this assurance was given to a delegation of the coordination committee to resolving the Sikh and

Punjab problem which called on the governor general, O.P. Malhotra, yesterday evening.

The delegation had earlier twice met with the prime minister last week. The governor assured the delegation that steps will be initiated to make the entry of devotees into the Golden Temple, Amritsar, easier. He said that steps will also be taken to draw up a complete a list of those killed in the Golden Temple Complex in June 1984. The governor said all efforts will be made to find and restore manuscript and artifacts reported missing from the Sikh Reference Library of the Golden Temple. He said that care will be taken to see the security forces operating in the state do not go beyond their legitimate duties while enforcing law and order and no harassment is caused to innocent people. General Malhotr sought the cooperation of the coordinating committee in restoring peace and normalcy in the state so that the coming elections are held in a free and fair manner and the country's democratic fabric and national unity are strengthened.

Janata Dal To Contest Elections

BK2404134291 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] The Janata Dal will contest elections in Punjab but will not have any truck with the Congress-I or the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. The party spokesman, Mr. Jaipal Reddy, told newsmen in New Delhi this evening that his party is in favor of a common approach to the problem. But seat adjustment with these two parties is a different issue. He said that the Janata Dal would also like to stay clear from the Akali Dal groups.

Parties React to New Poll Date

BK2404164091 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Excerpts] The dates for Lok Sabha and assembly polls for Assam and Punjab have been announced. While Assam will have a two-day poll on the 6th and 8th of June, Punjab will go to polls on the 22d of June. Announcing this in New Delhi this evening, the chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, said the poll process will be completed in Assam on the 12th of June, while in Punjab on the 25th of June. The commission is issuing separate notifications announcing the new poll dates in respect of Punjab and Assam. Mr. Seshan clarified that nominations in these two states which began on the 19th of this month will come to an end on this Friday [26 April] along with other states. Scrutiny will be on Saturday and the last date of withdrawal is the 29th of this month. [passage omitted]

The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] say that along with the Congress-I and CPI they have decided to participate in elections in Punjab with the present schedule of date for nominations, but the Congress-I maintains that its central leadership is yet to formulate its stand on the issue. The Congress-I spokesman, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, told newsmen in New Delhi this evening that there have been discussions with other parties at the state level. He said the party high command is to get a feedback before a final decision is taken and added that the question of Congress-I candidates filing nominations will arise only when a decision is reached. Mr. Mukherjee also said that his party wanted complete delinking of elections in Punjab from the rest of the country. He said if the present schedule of filing nominations remain unaltered and only the date of polling is postponed, it will expose the candidates to the security risk for a much longer time.

Earlier, the CPI-M spokesman, Mr. Harkishen Singh Surjeet, and the BJP vice president, Mr. Sundar Singh Bhandari, in separate briefings confirmed the participation of the four parties in Punjab elections. Mr. Surjeet said the aim is to rally all nationalist forces to isolate and defeat militants. The BJP leader, Mr. L.K. Advani, also urged all political parties to evolve a joint strategy to contest the ensuing elections in Punjab so that candidates sponsored by militants and separatist groups can be isolated. Talking to reporters in Bhopal today, Mr. Advani said that the BJP was ready for such a strategy and advised his party leadership to hold talks with others.

Government to Review Detainees' Cases

BK2404164491 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] The Punjab government has decided to immediately undertake a crash exercise to review all cases of detainees under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act except those involved in heinous crimes like murder. According to an official spokesman in Chandigarh today, cases of those below 20 who are segregated from others will be reviewed on a priority basis. In doubtful cases, an undertaking of good conduct from concerned village panchayats [rural bodies] will be obtained before recommending the withdrawal of cases. The spokesman said after their release in batches, such youths will be provided training for gainful employment in camps set up by the state government.

CPI Undecided on Election Participation

BK2504034291 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] The CPI [Communist Party of India] leader, Mr. Indarjit Gupta, has said that his party has yet to decide on participation in the Punjab elections. He told newsmen in Midnapore that the decision will be taken only after a final meeting with the party's Punjab unit.

Meanwhile, the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] has decided to contest four Lok Sabha and 54 Assembly seats in Punjab. A party spokesman said in Jullundur that the list of candidates and constituencies will be released today.

Security Forces Kill Six 'Militants'

BK2504085291 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] In Punjab, six militants were killed and six arrested following separate encounters with security forces last night. According to the official spokesman, four militants were killed in three encounters in Gurdaspur District and two militants in Jullundur District.

Meanwhile, six militants have been arrested in Amritsar, Jullundur, and Patiala Districts. Elsewhere, an unidentified gunman shot dead two persons in Moga area of Faridkot District and one in Samrala area of Ludhiana District.

Security Forces Number 'Terrorists' Casualties

BK2304085991 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0850 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Over 140 terrorists were killed and more than 760 apprehended in operations launched by the BSF [Border Security Force] and CRPF [Central Reserve Police Force] in Punjab, Kashmir, and other places during the first quarter of the year. According to press releases issued in New Delhi, the BSF apprehended 645 militants in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. One hundred seventeen militants were killed and a large quantity of arms and ammunition seized in the operations. It also intercepted 16,000 infiltrators on the eastern frontiers. The CRPF had 42 encounters in the first fortnight of this month in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. Twenty-seven terrorists were killed and 115 apprehended in the operations. It also seized a large quantity of arms and ammunition.

BHEL To Supply Equipment to Nuclear Plant

BK2204085991 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0850 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] The public sector Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, BHEL, has bagged the prestigious 40 crore rupee order for supply four steam generators for the first 500 megawatt unit of the Tarapur atomic power project near Bombay. The steam generators will be manufactured at BHEL's Trichy plant.

A press release issued in New Delhi today said BHEL has also done design and engineering of 50 megawatt steam generators and all the major primary heat exchangers, including standby cooler and moderator heat exchanger.

Oil, Gas Discovered in Tamil Nadu

BK2504084991 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] In Tamil Nadu, oil and gas have been struck at Kannapuram near Tiruvarur in Tanjavur District. The new well is giving about 500 barrels of oil and 60,000 cubic meters of gas per day. Oil has also been struck in the fifth well at Nannilam in the same district. The flow of oil in the well is reported to be about 500 barrels a day.

Railway Projects in Bangladesh, Nepal Planned

BK2304084691 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] The Indian Railway Construction Company [IRCON] is planning to take up projects in Bangladesh and Nepal in a big way. The turnkey project for setting up of a plant to manufacture prestressed test concrete sleepers in Bangladesh is already under way. It has also bagged a 39 crore rupee project for the construction of a highway between Dhaka and Chittagong. IRCON will help Bangladesh railways in constructing special type of steel bridges.

In Nepal, IRCON hopes to get a good share of the work when the Himalayan kingdom goes in for a railway system in the near future. It is already involved in the development of a road network in Nepal.

Iran

Majles Debate on Education Minister Reviewed

LD2404112591

[Editorial Report] Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian at 0450 GMT on 24 April broadcasts a 90-minute recorded relay from the Majles, which is discussing the censure motion against Education Minister Mohammad 'Ali Najafi. The relay begins with a brief discussion between Speaker Karrubi and other unidentified persons about the order in which pre-agenda speakers will speak.

Karrubi then announces that the censure motion against Education Minister Mohammad 'Ali Najafi will begin. He explains that first one or more of those involved in the censure motion will speak for two hours and then the minister concerned has three hours in which to speak either alone or he could give some of this time to one or two other deputies, each of which could be allocated up to half an hour. Critics of the education minister will speak for half an hour followed by a reply by the minister himself, who will also speak for half an hour. Voting on the motion will follow. The session will last for a total of six hours.

Deputy Habibi is the first speaker in favor of the censure motion against the minister. He begins by defending the right to interpellate saying that this practice does not weaken the government as some have claimed, but can act as a factor for strengthening it. He then says that this particular censure motion is not a political move on the part of any faction, but a concern for duties and responsibilities. The reason for the interpellation of the minister was that there have been many complaints by persons involved with education and the Education Ministry and by parents about the activities and

behavior of that ministry. There have, for instance, been large-scale replacements of education officials in all parts of the country, he says.

Habibi goes on: "About 75 percent of the ministry's director-generals in the province were replaced after Mr. Najafi was appointed as education minister; and the replacement of the heads of regional education departments all over the country has been very extensive. For instance, in the provinces of Lorestan and Kohkiluyeh va Buyer Ahmadi this replacement has been approximately 100 percent. In Zanjan it amounts to 92 percent, in Bakhtaran 87 percent, and in Tehran it has been 85 percent. Time does not permit mention of other places."

The question is, Habibi continues, were all these heads of education departments incompetent from the standpoint of "the values of the Islamic revolution" in their work and experience? Deputy Habibi says that this trend has a "destructive" element and creates confusion in the minds of people, especially in the minds of the committed members of the population, the families of martyrs, and the deprived in society. A new minister does not need to replace a large percentage of officials of his ministry when he begins work, Habibi says.

The next speaker is Mr. Musavi, who criticizes the Education Ministry for disregarding the law and regulations concerning education, such as free education for all. He pleads that the Constitution must be observed if the needs of the country's poorer people are to be met.

Next speaker is Mr. Fallah, who complains about the arrogance and rudeness of Education Ministry officials in some instances and he criticizes the minister for neglecting his ministry. He also criticizes the ministry for neglecting the repair and upkeep of schools and for looking at education as if it were a commercial enterprise.

Mr. Robati speaks next in support of the devoted and faithful people who work under hard circumstances in education and who have upheld the values of the revolution all these years, only to be replaced by others. He argues for more allocation of funds for schools and describes the behavior of the Ministry of Education as "detrimental" to education and society.

Mr. Fallah then speaks again, criticizing the education minister for not being able to eliminate past weaknesses, but acting arrogantly in dismissing dedicated people who have been working hard under hard conditions for many years.

Confidence Vote Received

LD2404160191 Tehran IRNA in English 1331 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 24, IRNA—Education Minister Mohammad 'Ali Najafi received a vote of confidence from the Majles Wednesday following his impeachment demanded by some MPs [members of parliament] earlier this month.

Following heated speeches made by Najafi's opponents and supporters at the Majles, 137 deputies voted in his favor, 77 voted against, and 11 abstained.

Najafi is the second member of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani's cabinet to be interpellated by the Majles. Earlier, former Health Minister Dr. Iraj Fazel was impeached and given a vote of no confidence by the MPs.

Najafi appeared before the Majles deputies to respond to the charges levelled against him including mismanagement and appointment of incompetent officials at his ministry.

As soon as the Majles' move to impeach Najafi was made public, some of his supporters, in remarks published by the press, termed the minister's impeachment as a "bid to undermine" President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's 20 month old government.

The president himself voiced support for Najafi in a speech he made to a group of Education Ministry officials here Monday.

When Hashemi-Rafsanjani first introduced his cabinet ministers to the Majles for a vote of confidence, Najafi received 160 votes for, 86 against, and 12 abstentions.

Some 225 MPs cast votes today. Najafi needed a quorum of 113 votes to retain his post.

President Thanks Majles

LD2404172791 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] The cabinet held a session this afternoon. Education Minister 'Ali Najafi—who received a vote of confidence with a sizeable majority from the Majles deputies—was present at the meeting. President Hashemi-Rafsanjani congratulated him on being able to continue to serve in one of the most sensitive and important sections of the executive and cultural branch. He thanked the speaker and most of the Majles deputies for their support for the education minister and that ministry's management.

The president said that it is important that the Majles does not disrupt the activities of a ministry that is responsible for over 14.5 million students and 75,000 employees and affects every sector of society. He expressed the hope that henceforth the current programs of the Education Ministry will continue unhindered and at an appropriate pace after this new assessment.

Armenian Community Commemorates 1915 Massacre

NC2404164391 Paris AFP in English 1509 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 24 (AFP)—Tens of thousands of Armenians marched through the Iranian capital on Wednesday seeking official recognition of what they consider the genocide of Armenians in Turkey in 1915.

Observers estimated 80,000 people turned out, a major part of the estimated 100,000-strong Armenian community in Tehran, at a time when an estimated 1.5 million Kurds have fled repression in Iraq and are massed in Turkish and Iranian border regions.

Demonstrators held banners recalling the April 24, 1915 anniversary "of the massacre of Armenians by the fascist Turkish Government" and waved Iranian flags and portraits of Iranian Islamic leaders.

Holding children on their shoulders, the demonstrators shook clenched fists and chanted "Turkish governments are the mercenaries of imperialists" and "The Islamic Republic (Iran) aids the oppressed".

Whole families of Armenians gathered outside St. Sarkis Cathedral and marched to Africa Square where Archbishop Ardak Manoukian of the Orthdox Church and a dozen priests recalled the massacre of Armenians.

"Your cry and your message, which is a just message about a just cause... will be heard at the Turkish frontier", he said.

In a statement, the demonstrators said "the failure to condemn this first genocide of the century and the international community's silence gave aggressors like (Iraqi President) Saddam Husayn the chance to massacre innocents. "The most fearful evidence are the refugees and homeless people in northern Iraq".

Demonstrators called on the United Nations to condemn what they termed the genocide of 1915 and on the European Parliament to "put into practice" its statement condemning the massacre.

Citing historical evidence, Armenians say more than a million of their people were killed in a genocide systematically carried out by Ottoman Turkey in 1915, many of them during a forced march into the Syrian desert.

Ankara denies the accusation. It says there were high losses among Armenians, Kurds and Turkish nationals in 1915 during World War I, and charges the Christian Armenians of having sided with the enemy Russia.

More on Demonstrations

LD2404173191 Tehran IRNA in English 1441 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 24, IRNA—Tehran's Armenian community held a gathering in their church today to commemorate the 76th anniversary of the alleged massacre of Armenians by Ottoman Turkey in 1915.

Following the ceremony which was presided over by Archbishop Ardak Manoukian, the gathering marched towards the United Nations office in Tehran, chanting slogans against the Turkish Government.

A similar ceremony was also held in an Armenian church in the central city of Esfahan, at the end of which community members held a peaceful rally in a park to read a resolution. The marchers criticized the Turkish Government for what it called the forced relocation of Armenians from their homeland, and censured international circles for "indifference" towards Turkey's policies. The resolution reiterated that the struggle will continue until justice is done to the Armenian cause.

The Armenians claim that 1.5 million of their co-religionists lost their lives in 1915 in Ottoman Turkey. For centuries Armenia formed an integral part of the Persian Empire, before it was occupied by Czarist Russia in the 19th century.

Today Iran is home to sizeable communities of Armenians, who under the Islamic Republic Constitution are free to practice their religion and language, and even elect a representative to the Majles (parliament).

President Meets Students, Praises Islamic Values

LD2304170991 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Excerpt] This morning, members of the Central Council of the Students' Islamic Association, accompanied by representatives of the association from various cities, met with President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the head of the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council. During the meeting, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, referring to student duties in an Islamic society, said: Perhaps in the past the wrong attitude prevailed that students should behave harshly with a negative mentality. Such attitudes are not the path of Islam. The students should be the most enlightened part of a society. In an Islamic system, students should obey justice and should oppose forbidden deeds and encourage goods deeds in accordance with justice. Students should not abuse the free atmosphere of universities.

Referring to the university atmosphere before the cultural revolution, the president said: One of the important objectives of the cultural revolution was to create a healthy atmosphere in universities for the growth of healthy Islamic thought and the exchange of ideas in an environment free of negative and abrasive behavior.

Addressing the audience, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani went on: You, the students, can speak about your righteous ideas in a healthy manner, and you must concentrate your activities around the objective of serving the guardian of the cause. The views and instructions of the esteemed representatives of the guardian of the cause in universities can be a good basis for legality of the students' activities in the country's universities.

The president, while asking the students to avoid seeking a monopoly of ideas and selfish behavior in universities, called upon them to live in accordance with the instruction of Islam and in line with the wishes of the esteemed leader, and to have respect for open discussions and exchange of ideas.

The president stressed the importance of education and the promotion of science among the committed and dedicated students in universities. [passage omitted]

Oil Minister on Greater Role for Private Sector

LD2204143191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] In order to attract the participation of nongovernmental sectors, the Oil Ministry has decided to hand over the implementation of some domestic petrochemical production projects to the private sector. According to the Petroleum Ministry, the proposed petrochemical projects are numerous enough to meet all demands and new projects will also be announced in the future.

In an interview with reporters this morning, Minister of Petroleum Gholamreza Aqazadeh-Kho'i presented a list of nine projects and said: The Petroleum Ministry will give full support to investors and will cooperate with investors with regard to technical knowledge, specialist manpower for designs, participation in international tenders and the provision of the necessary facilities.

He said: The raw materials for the proposed projects will be provided domestically in full and the importance of undertaking the projects domestically is so great that there will be no concern about sales. At the same time, Iran's National Petrochemical Industries Company is also prepared to help applicants with the sale of products.

The petroleum minister said that, in effect, this amounts to the handing over of part of the Petroleum Ministry's rights and duties to the private sector and said: In reality, we are authorizing the private sector to carry out some of our tasks. We will sign scheduled agreements with them and we will emphasize and supervise the precise implementation. The Petroleum Ministry gives the assurance that it will assist fully investors in the provision of specialist manpower. He said that the Petroleum Ministry may take on partnerships with the investors to some extent to implement the projects and noted: Even though the country has great need for petrochemical products, and there is no doubt that all the products will be sold domestically, nevertheless, if the possibility of export exists for the implementor of the project, there will be no obstacles in the way.

The petroleum minister announced in conclusion that if the projects are well received, new steps will be taken in this line in the oil sector in the future.

Commerce Minister, UNCTAD Official Meet

LD2304185591 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] The UN Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD] will cooperate with our country in the fields of nonpetroleum exports, exchanges of experts, and information on trade at the international level, as well as the expansion of the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in international trade.

Minister of Commerce Vahaji announced this when commenting on the outcome of his talks with Kenneth Dadzie, the UNCTAD secretary general. He said: Taking into consideration that the Islamic Republic of Iran is keen to expand its cooperation with international trade organizations, the question of increasing Iran's links with the world economy was discussed in these talks.

The UNCTAD official, in an interview with our reporter, said that UNCTAD is prepared to offer technical and technological assistance to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Pledges Cooperation

LD2204123391 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Mr. Kenneth Dadzie, secretary general of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNCTAD, met and conferred with Foreign Minister Velayati this morning. According to a Central News Unit report, in that meeting the UNCTAD secretary general termed his meetings with our country's officials as constructive and said: UNCTAD is ready to employ all its capabilities toward cooperation with Iran on trade and development, transfer of technology, monetary and financial issues, and toward joining the Islamic Republic of Iran [IRI] to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Mr. Velayati, for his turn, having pointed out the IRI's new policy with regard to the issue of trade and development and the comprehensive post-imposed war reconstruction plan for the country, stressed the IRI's resolve in participating more actively in the activities of the international economic organizations in accordance with the new economic policies; to which end it expects greater cooperation from that organization and welcomes the training and technical programs of UNCTAD with the IRI.

UN Envoy Criticizes U.S. Arms in Mideast

LD2404173291 Tehran IRNA in English 0820 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] United Nations, New York, April 24, IRNA—Iran's Permanent Envoy to the United Nations Kamal Kharrazi addressing the annual session of the U.N. Disarmament Conference (UNDC) Tuesday lashed out at major powers for pumping up demands for arms and transfer of weaponary to the volatile region of the Persian Gulf.

Kharrazi regretted that the U.S. Administration has decided to sell sophisticated weapons to a number of the Middle East countries.

"This erroneous approach together with the presence of foreign forces in the Persian Gulf area, are inherently destabilizing," he emphasized adding that the second Iraqi aggression in the Persian Gulf "has given rise to a sense of urgency to control the transfer of arms to region."

Stating that "the piling up of new types of destructive weaponry is not the proper instrumentality for securing a viable peace and security in the Persian Gulf region, he stressed "the urgent need is to develop a new way of thinking, to establish and strengthen confidence-building measures and to shape a new form of cooperation among littoral states in that area."

"It is our deep conviction that anything short of establishment of a true regional security and cooperation arrangement without interference of foreign powers cannot serve the real interests of countries in the region on the long term stability of this strategic area."

"Any genuine security and cooperation agreement in the Persian Gulf should encompass all countries of the region whose religious, cultural and economic bonds provide the fundamental incentives for solidarity among themselves," Kharrazi stressed.

Referring to Iran's proposal to the U.N. General Assembly in 1974 on establishment of a nuclear free zone in the Middle East, he said Iran believes that the current circumstances in the region, "make it all the more imperative that every effort to be directed towards the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East."

"An important measure is to place all the nuclear facilities of the region under International Atomic Energy Agency's verification system."

The UNDC session started its work last Monday and will proceed until May 11.

Commentary Notes Improving Relations With EC

LD2404142191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1104 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Excerpts] Over the past few days we have seen visits to Iran by European and international officials and, in return, various officials of our country have travelled to some European countries, to resolve the recent Persian Gulf crisis and the forced migration of Iraqi Kurds to neighboring Iran and Turkey. [passage omitted]

After the Iranian Government and nation announced their ungrudging and philanthropic aid to the Iraqi refugees, various EC officials praised Iran for its efforts and declared their readiness to step up their aid to the Iraqi refugees in Iran. What is important is for these efforts to become actions and save the oppressed people of Iraq from their sufferings. [passage omitted]

Informed analysts believe that in addition to being an effective step toward resolving the dilemma of the Iraqi refugees, the reciprocal visits by European and Iranian statesmen during the Persian Gulf crisis, and later in the course of the forced migration of Iraqi Kurds to neighboring countries, will hasten an improvement of ties between Iran and the EC.

Iran's ties with European countries, whether they are EC members or not, are based on common interests and respect for each other's rights. Together with reciprocal contacts, mutual efforts are in progress to improve relations between Iran and the EC, as follows:

The talks between Iranian and EC representatives in Dublin, the Irish capital; the meetings between the Italian, Luxembourg, and Irish ministers and our country's foreign minister at the United Nations in New York; the recent visit to our country by the foreign ministers of Luxembourg, Holland, and Italy on behalf of the EC.

There have been other meetings and discussions all of which are signs of the improving relations between Iran and Europe. In this connection, in addition to the expansion of economic and commercial ties, certain political understandings have been reached by the two sides.

On the whole one could say that Europe's stand during the recent crisis was similar to Iran's. The emphasis put on Iraq's territorial integrity, the right by the people of that country to determine their own fate, stressing the significance of Iran's role in the future of the Persian Gulf region, condemning the crushing of the defenseless popular forces by Iraq and accelerating the solution to the recent crisis have been among the common political denominators between the two sides in the Persian Gulf crisis.

In any case, the trend of understanding and cooperation in various political and economic fields is expected to increase further and, in the meantime, the question of the innocent Iraqi refugees must be favorably solved.

IAEA Official Tours Nuclear Facilities

LD2204123591 Tehran IRNA in English 1042 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 22, IRNA—The visiting deputy director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Noremly Bin Muslim inspected several scientific, technical and research projects of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation (IAEO) in three Iranian cities Saturday and Sunday.

In his tour of the centers in Tehran, Karaj and Esfahan, Bin Muslim was briefed on problems on the way of implementation of the projects and also reviewed ways of IAEA cooperation with Iran for completion of the projects.

Bin Muslim also met with vice-president and IAEO head Reza Amrollahi and submitted a message from the IAEA director-general. He also expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved in the organisation's projects.

The two sides further discussed completion of Bushehr nuclear plant in southern Iran with respect to talks held with German authorities in this respect.

Commentary on Need for U.S. 'Steps' for Ties

NC2504094491 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Central News Unit Research Group commentary]

[Excerpts] In the name of God. Today, 25 April, is the anniversary of the failure of the American military operation in Tabas. [passage omitted]

Following the victory of the Islamic revolution, which dismantled American interests in Iran and ended the American Government's domination over our country, America's hostility toward a country that was suddenly facing a moral and ideological development started. There is no doubt that the Islamic revolution's values and aspirations were the causes from which that country's hostile approach to the Muslim Iranian nation stemmed. The blows that America received from the Islamic revolution and the question mark that was placed on America's international prestige by the heroic Iranian nation and the other Muslims, led to a wave of Islamic inclination in regional Muslim nations and threatened the illegitimate interests of the arrogant powers in these areas too. Instigating Iraq to start a war with Iran, threatening to mine Iran's ports, creating a security belt by establishing the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, and freezing Iranian assets were all part of America's imperialist and bullying policies.

America did not limit itself to these acts. It also strengthened Iraq in the imposed war through various means. The attacks on Iranian ships, the destruction of Iranian oil platforms, and the downing of an Iranian airbus passenger plane in the Persian Gulf waters, which led to the death of all its passengers and crew, each show the dimensions of American intervention in post-Islamic revolution Iran.

The following facts have lead the U.S. Administration to become interested in reestablishing its ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran: The U.S. realization that its hostile behavior toward Islamic Iran backfired and damaged the United States, its recognition of the Muslim Iranian nation and its steely determination, and its understanding of the Islamic Republic's position in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. The United States has taken no practical steps in this direction.

Addressing America's wish to establish relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, President Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani stated this week: Generally speaking, I think that with the hostilities that the Americans are showing toward the Islamic revolution, something we are seeing in its dealings with the Iraqi Government and the Iraqi people, the situation will remain as it is. The Americans should try to prove,to our people and to our country with their deeds and not with words that they have changed their policy and that their stance is at least the same stance that others and the Europeans have.

Nurbakhsh Heads Delegation to IMF, World Bank

NC2504094991 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] Mr. Nurbakhsh, minister of economic affairs and finance, left Tehran for Washington this morning at the head of an economic and political delegation that will participate in the joint IMF-World Bank session.

During this session the ministers of economic affairs and finance and the governors of the member countries' central banks will discuss various international economic and commercial problems. The problem of Third World debt, world environmental problems, and current developments in international trade are among the topics that will be included in the agenda. The session will begin its work on 28 April and will last three days.

Iran, Chile To Resume Diplomatic Relations

LD2404171691 Tehran IRNA in English 1643 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 24, IRNA—Iran and Chile have agreed to resume relations, which were severed after the triumph of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 because of the dictatorial nature of the Chilean Government.

The renewal of ties documents were inked by the ambassadors of the two countries in France in Paris today.

Last year the government of the Chilian dictator General Augusto Pinochet was swept away from office in the general elections in that country.

Rafsanjani, Kohl Discuss Aid for Kurds

LD2404161691 Tehran IRNA in English 1457 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 24, IRNA—President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani on Wednesday received a phone call from German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in relation with Iraqi Kurdish refugees in Iran and their settlement operations. President Rafsanjani said to the German chancellor that the refugee Kurds in Iran need better international aid. He added also that centralized international efforts should be undertaken to help the refugees return home.

Helmut Kohl in response recognized the need for improving aid to the refugees. He also expressed pleasure

with the amicable relations between Iran and Germany and hoped that he would meet Hashemi-Rafsanjani at an early future opportunity.

President Receives Sierra Leone Official

LD2304181791 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani this morning received the speaker of the Sierra Leone parliament. The Sierra Leone parliamentary speaker presented a written message from his country's president to our country's president, and briefed him on the situation in southwest Africa, and the latest events in Sierra Leone. He also expressed sympathy toward the Iraqi refugees and praised the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran for accepting the refugees, despite the difficulties brought about by the eight-year war imposed by Iraq on Iran. He stressed the need for comprehensive assistance by the international community in this connection.

According to the Central News Unit, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani thanked the Sierra Leone president for his message, and emphasized the strengthening of relations between the two countries. He added: We are, in principle, prepared to assist in solving the problems of Sierra Leone, and we are interested in seeing that the tranquility the region enjoyed be preserved so that African countries—bearing in mind their economic difficulties—may be able to direct their efforts toward bettering the lives of the people of that deprived continent.

Discuss Ties

LD2304102491 Tehran IRNA in English 0828 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 23, IRNA—The visiting speaker of the Sierra Leone parliament William Niaka Stephen Conteh in a meeting with Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam Mehdi Karrubi here Monday lauded Iran's humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi refugees .

Conteh who arrived here Monday on a two-day unofficial visit with a message for President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani praised Iran's willingness to strengthen ties with African states and its efforts in solving African issues.

He also briefed Karrubi on the latest developments in South West Africa and Sierra Leone.

Referring to the latest developments in the Persian Gulf region, Hojjat ol-Eslam Karrubi said that despite problems created by eight years of war, Iran has welcomed over one million Iraqi refugees.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Karrubi lashed out at Western media for their silence towards crimes of the Baghdad regime and said they are concealing them from the world people.

The Majles speaker stressed Iran's willingness to cooperate with third world countries and expressed the hope that such cooperation will free the African nations from deprivation.

Reportage on Foreign Minister's Visit to Europe

WA2404162291

For reportage on the visit by Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati to Europe, including reports on his talks with top officials, please see the Denmark, Ireland, and Luxembourg country sections of the 24 April West Europe DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Pakistan

Direct Talks With Kabul Said Scheduled 28 Apr

BK2404140691 Lahore THE NATION in English 24 Apr 91 p 1

[From Shamim Shahid]

[Text] Peshawar—In a bid to reach a political settlement to the protracted Afghan problem, first ever direct talks between high-level officials of Pakistan and Afghanistan will start in Geneva on April 28, THE NATION reliably learnt here on Tuesday.

However, the Afghan Interim Government President Professor Sebghatullah Mujaddedi has attributed the direct talks between the two countries against the interests of Afghan people.

Reliable sources said that Pakistan delegation will be headed by former chief of Inter Services Intelligence, General Hameed Gul. The Afghan delegation in the said talks may be represented by Gen Ishaq Tokhi, adviser to President Najib, Mr Ghulam Farooq Yaqoobi, minister for national security and Firdaus Khan Mohamand.

The Peshawar-based Afghan Consulate when contacted for further details said that Afghan Government is ready for talks with both Pakistan and Mujahidin to resolve the Afghan problem.

It may be mentioned here that the reported direct talks between Pakistan and Afghan authorities are first of its nature since December 27, 1979.

Meanwhile, the AIG [Afghan Interim Government] said that they have a right to lodge a protest with the Pakistan Government on holding talks with the Najib government representatives. AIG was of the view that Afghan people could not accept any sort of accord between Pakistan and Najib governments.

Spokesman Denies Talks Scheduled

BK2404155991 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 24 Apr 91

[Text] Pakistan has reaffirmed its commitment to a political solution of the Afghan problem. A Foreign

Office spokesman in Islamabad today denied the report published in a section of the press that talks are scheduled between Pakistan and Afghanistan at the end of this month in Geneva. The spokesman said the report is totally fabricated and aims at creating misunderstanding.

The spokesman said Pakistan wants a political solution to this problem. He referred to Pakistan's diplomatic efforts for a (?concrete) dialogue and discussion. In connection with these efforts, Pakistan held many rounds of talks with the UN secretary general and his representative in New York and Islamabad. High- level discussions will soon take place with Moscow, Tehran, and Riyadh. Pakistan is also in constant touch with the leaders of the Afghan Interim Government.

Bhutto Faults Government, Vows To Regain Power

BK2504024291 Hong Kong AFP in English 0134 GMT 25 Apr 91

[By Christopher Boian]

[Text] London, April 25 (AFP)—Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's former prime minister and the first female head of government in any Moslem country, has three things to say: She is angry, she will fight and she intends to lead her party back to power.

"Things are very bleak in Pakistan today," Ms. Bhutto said. "There is no respect for the law, in fact there is no law at all. There is no representative government. People live in fear for their lives."

Speaking in an interview with AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, the 37-year-old daughter of the late Pakistani Premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto sharply criticized the current government saying its shortcomings ranged from ineptitude to coercion, corruption and illegitimacy.

"They are completely destroying the political system. They are riding roughshod over the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), they are riding roughshod over all political dissidents," she stated.

Ms. Bhutto, whose 20-month term as prime minister ended with the unceremonious dismissal of her government by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan on August 6 last year, accused Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of threatening PPP members with "trumped up" criminal charges to persuade them to leave the party.

"They approach members of the PPP and they tell them 'you have a choice: Leave politics or leave the PPP,'" Ms. Bhutto said.

She claimed she had also been approached after her dismissal but prior to elections for a new government last October and told that if she agreed to quit politics a series of criminal corruption charges against her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, would be dropped.

"I was asked not to file nomination papers, not to contest the elections and if I complied my husband would be spared," Ms. Bhutto said.

Dressed in a flower-pattern sari and speaking quietly and intently throughout the hour-long interview, conducted at a private home in an affluent London district, Ms. Bhutto derided the main policies of Mr. Sharif's government and charged him with "crude and blatant" intimidation of political opponents.

She described Mr. Sharif's announced intention to introduce shariah, or Islam's Koranic law, throughout Pakistan as "a public relations exercise" devoid of both substance and detail.

"Again, it's typical of the regime. Nobody knows whether it's going to be a clerical bill or a liberal bill. He's trying to tell the clerics that it's a clerical bill and he's trying to tell the liberals it's a liberal bill.

"In fact he hasn't presented a bill at all," she said, adding: "And what is shariah? Unless it's codified, one man's shariah is different from another man's shariah.".

The bill was presented to the National Assembly on April 11 but was flatly rejected two days later by Pakistan's eight main religious parties, including the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami, a key member of the ruling Islamic Democratic Alliance coalition.

Mr. Sharif however has won praise from President Khan and other leading Pakistani politicians who have described his moves towards economic deregulation and national consensus as "historic."

He has also been credited recently with resolving several bitter and long-standing inter-provincial feuds in Pakistan and earlier this month Mr. Sharif boasted that since coming to power his government had introduced "revolutionary economic and industrial policies" that would create new wealth.

"Gimmicks," Ms. Bhutto said. "They don't work for long. What he is doing is not privatization at all but is de-nationalizing," she added, suggesting that large portions of government-owned assets were being sold too cheaply to too few people.

"Pakistan's program of privatization was enacted by the PPP and it was legislated by the PPP. The legislation was passed last June and what we planned was the sale of public assets to large numbers of small shareholders."

Asked about the criminal charges pending against her husband and herself, Ms. Bhutto described them as "ridiculous" and "ludicrous." She denied the charge that she had improperly allowed ministers to use the prime minister's private Air Force jet for personal reasons.

"But the irony of it is that even if I had it is perfectly legal," she said.

Ms. Bhutto admitted that her government had made mistakes during her time in office but defended its record and said that if she were eventually returned to power her first priority would be to set up a special commission to study the records of all Pakistani governments since the country was created in 1947.

"In the past we did make mistakes. Our biggest mistake was electing (Mr. Khan) as president. If we hadn't elected him then he wouldn't have been in a position to subvert democracy."

She also said that any future PPP government would "establish the rule of law" and would bring "economic and social justice" to Pakistan.

"I'm being punished for being honest. And the message that is going out to the young generation of Pakistan is that if you collaborate with military dictatorships everything is fine for you. That's what really pains me. There's a great deal of de-moralization and young people don't have moral values. As a mother with two children, I'm concerned," Ms. Bhutto said.

But despite her bitter criticism of the current government in Pakistan and her grim assessment of the social climate in her country, Ms. Bhutto made it clear that she does not view her days in politics there as over. "We have a dream for our country—democracy."

Asked if she planned to return to power, Ms. Bhutto paused and then smiled. "Yes, absolutely," she said.

Former Minister Found Guilty, Fined

BK2404121291 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 24 April 91

[Text] In Peshawar today, a special court comprising Mr. Justice Wali Mohammad Khan fined former federal law minister of Pakistan People's Party, Syed Iftikhar Hussain Gilani, 20 lakh rupees, besides disqualifying him for seven years from being elected or chosen as a member of parliament or of provincial assembly. The judge in his short judgment has accused Syed Iftikhar Gilani guilty of misconduct under article three of PPO [Parliament and Provincial Assemblies Disqualification Order] number 16 of 1977 and convicted him thereunder. The court sentenced him to pay a fine of 20 lakh rupees or in default to incur one and half year rigorous imprisonment. He will have to pay the fine before or on the 22d of May next, the judgment adds.

People's Party Said Involved in SAL Hijacking

BK2504094291 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0900 GMT 25 Apr 91

[Text] The Federal Investigation Agency [FIA] has filed a case against Ghulam Abbas Chandio, former adviser to former Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah, and arrested him in connection with the hijacking of a Singapore Airlines [SAL] aircraft on 26 March this year. This was stated by Wajahat Latif, the FIA director general, at a news conference in Islamabad today. Giving details of the investigation conducted by the FIA team in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, he said the investigations reveal that the hijackers had explosives with them and it was confirmed by relevant authorities in Singapore. The FIA director general said the leader of the hijackers, Zahed Hussain Soomro, and his accomplice, Javed Akhtar Qiani, were active members of the Pakistan People's Party. Zahed Hussain Soomro maintained close ties with Ghulam Abbas Chandio and repeatedly made contacts with Chandio from Singapore before hijacking the plane.

Indian Envoy Downplays Negative Aspects

BK2304141691 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 23 Apr 91 p 12

[By Murtaza Malik]

[Text] Peshawar, April 22—Indian High Commissioner Mr. Dixit has said that negative factors like Kashmir and Siachen did exist in the context of Indo-Pak relations, but there were a number of positive aspects also which could help remove the tension and promise good neighbourly behaviour.

In an informal chat with Peshawar newsmen Monday [22 April], the Islamabad-based diplomat, who was here to attend the Badshah Khan Amn [Peace] Conference, accused Pakistan of being responsible for the dispute over Kashmir but added that even if it was resolved, it would not necessarily mean that the stage was set for a trouble-free relationship as there are bound to be problems between neighbours. According to him, after Kashmir, it could be trade and water but "let's hope we live in peace." The agreement not to hold the large-scale military exercises like the Brass Tack and Zarbe Momin which created unnecessary tension and the signals from Pakistan Chambers of Commerce for liberalisation of trade, he, however, said did provide a silver lining.

India, he said, was so deeply involved in its internal problems that it could hardly think of hegemony of which it was too often accused of but "let me assure you that public opinion in India had neither supported expansionism in the past nor would it do in future." Militarily, he said, India had involved itself in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka but within six months the Press in that country started bitterly criticising the government for this adventurism. Since such an approach did not promise any political or economic gains, it was no use resorting to it.

He claimed that the communal riots in India could not be said to be Hindu-Muslim conflict as generally believed, but these had economic and social reasons.

The Indian High Commissioner denied that the RAW [Research and Analysis Wing] agents were involved in terrorism in Sindh and remarked that if the Government of Pakistan was so sure of the Indian infiltrators that it could give their exact number, it was surprising that

despite being counted they had not been captured they had not been captured. On the other hand he alleged that Pakistan was actively involved in the uprising in Occupied Kashmir and in the Punjab of which he claimed "we have a proof and given evidence."

Replying to a question, he said that America could be a superpower, but it was nobody to impose its so-called new world order on others. The unity in Asia, he added, could compel America to change her attitude and approach, and instead of being dictated the unity could itself dictate.

Parliamentarians Among Suspected Drug 'Barons'

BK2304123891 Lahore THE NATION in English 23 Apr 91 pp 1, 4

[Text] Islamabad—Pakistan Narcotics Control Board [PNCB] has furnished a list of 73 barons from Balochistan, who are suspected to be consistently enaged in inter-provincial and cross continental smuggling of narcotics to the relevant authorities in Islamabad.

Highly informed sources revealed to THE NATION that the list includes at least an MNA [member of the National Assembly] and four MPAs [members of provincial assemblies] besides various notables.

The list is backed by a detailed report on drug trafficking through Balochistan and the data for which was also contributed by drug agencies of Europe and America. It was also in the light of this report that a raid was recently conducted by PNCB personnel to apprehend an MPA of Balochistan who had taken refuge at the residence of the Health Minister of Balochistan.

The report claims that almost all the suspected persons enjoy warm and close relation with some senior bureaucrats and tribal chiefs.

The detailed report claims that a consignment worth Rs [rupees] 6 crore on way to Karachi from Quetta was owned by the said MPA.

These barons also have established an active association with the dacoits [robbers] of Sindh who sometimes act as the middlemen and that on various occasions the dacoits not only were provided shelter in Quetta and other cities of Balochistan but various abducted [people] were kept at the residences and hide-outs owned by the barons.

The report regrets that the alleged involvement of the legislators in the gory business was damaging prestige of Pakistan in the international community.

It is worth mentioning here that an official of the Anti Drug Department of the United States in a seminar held recently in Washington had alleged that one of the top heroin smugglers of the world has become a member of the National Assembly of Pakistan.

The PNCB has further demanded more rights, resources and powers to expand recruitment. It also lamented that police of all the four provinces always remained reluctant to extend cooperation to the PNCB. It has recommended introduction of some rules and regulations making it obligatory for the Customs, Police and Rangers to help the PNCB.

The PNCB officials said that they were trying to approach the Prime Minister in order to oppose him of the facts behind the protection to the MPA by the provincial minister and other government functionaries and tribal chiefs. [sentence as published]

The report also notes that at least 80 per cent of the heroin consumed in Pakistan and smuggled abroad is produced in Afghanistan in the areas adjacent to the Durand Line besides Northwestern Frontiers of Pakistan. It says the drug is normally produced in the mobile factories (established in trucks) which usually remain in the said area and whenever the ongoing war in the troubled country intensifies, are brought back in the tribal areas.

Opium, the major ingredient of the deadly drug after repeated eradication of the poppy cultivation in Pakistan is mostly brought from Afghanistan to the country.